

## Analysis of the Implementation of Kaizen Culture on Work Effectiveness in the Food & Beverage Service at Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel

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Article History	Abstract
Received: 09 September 2025 Accepted: 14 November 2025 Published: 10 December 2025	<p><i>This study aims to analyze the implementation of Kaizen culture and its influence on work effectiveness within the Food &amp; Beverage Service department at Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel, Okinawa, Japan. The Kaizen philosophy rooted in continuous improvement and employee participation has been widely applied in manufacturing sectors, yet its adaptation in hospitality remains underexplored. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and analysis of operational documents involving managers, assistant managers, and service staff directly engaged in daily operations. The findings reveal that the integration of PDCA, 5S, and 3M principles fosters a structured, efficient, and disciplined work environment. The PDCA cycle promotes continuous evaluation and learning, the 5S framework enhances hygiene and orderliness, and the 3M elimination process optimizes workload balance and resource efficiency. Together, these practices contribute to improved service speed, reduced operational waste, and higher guest satisfaction. Key success factors include top management commitment, participatory leadership, and continuous training, while challenges involve sustaining employee awareness and cross-cultural adaptation among diverse staff. This research extends Kaizen theory by demonstrating its transferability from manufacturing to high-contact service industries, highlighting its dual role as a technical and cultural system of improvement. Practically, the study provides insights for hospitality managers seeking to institutionalize Kaizen as a sustainable approach to operational excellence and human-centered performance development.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Kaizen culture, PDCA, 5S, 3M, work effectiveness, hospitality management, continuous improvement.</p>



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### INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is one of the service sectors highly influenced by the dynamics of global competition. Service quality becomes the key factor in winning customer loyalty

(Kalele et al., 2025; Kotler & Keller, 2020; Towoliu et al., 2017). To address this challenge, various management strategies have been applied, one of which is the Kaizen culture originating from Japan. The Kaizen philosophy not only emphasizes technical efficiency but also encourages the involvement of all employees in continuous improvement (Singh & Singh, 2009; Carnerud & Bäckström, 2018; Liker & Convis, 2021).

Food & Beverage Service is one of the vital departments in a hotel as it directly relates to the guest experience. The increasing competition between hotels and independent restaurants demands an effective and innovative work system (Gisler, 2015; Chibili, 2019). In the context of Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel, with its high occupancy rates and complex service demands, the Kaizen culture becomes highly relevant as a strategy to maintain service quality.

However, most previous studies on Kaizen implementation have predominantly focused on the manufacturing sector, particularly in the automotive and industrial fields, emphasizing efficiency, waste reduction, and productivity (Imai, 2021; Rauch et al., 2020). Research exploring the adaptation of Kaizen principles in the hospitality context especially within Food & Beverage Service operations is still relatively limited and fragmented. Even studies in the service industry often center on general management practices rather than detailed operational implementation (Farrington et al., 2018; Suárez-Barraza et al., 2021). This reveals a knowledge gap in understanding how the fundamental elements of Kaizen PDCA, 5S, and 3M can be effectively translated into a high-contact service environment where emotional labor, guest interaction, and teamwork dynamics play crucial roles.

Furthermore, the cross-cultural adaptation of Kaizen from Japan's manufacturing-oriented context into international hospitality settings has not been comprehensively studied. Previous works (e.g., Jovanović et al., 2025; To, 2025) have noted that Kaizen's success depends on cultural compatibility, employee motivation, and leadership support. Yet, empirical evidence within multinational hotel environments especially in Japanese hospitality enterprises employing diverse staff from different cultural backgrounds is scarce. This study, therefore, fills this empirical and contextual gap by examining how Kaizen culture is internalized and practiced within the Food & Beverage Service of Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel in Okinawa, Japan.

From a theoretical standpoint, the concept of continuous improvement is closely linked to service performance, as consistent small-scale enhancements in processes, communication, and teamwork cumulatively lead to higher reliability, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction (Hill & Hill, 2020; Liker & Convis, 2021). Continuous improvement thus acts as a dynamic capability that transforms organizational learning into measurable service outcomes.

The novelty of this study lies in its contextual application of Kaizen philosophy to the hospitality sector, specifically in Food & Beverage Service operations, which demand real-time service delivery and human-centered interaction. By analyzing the integration of PDCA, 5S, and 3M in daily work routines, this research provides a new theoretical perspective on continuous improvement in service-based environments, demonstrating how Kaizen principles can be adapted to enhance both technical efficiency and service quality through a participatory work culture. Additionally, the study contributes practical insights into how employee involvement,

leadership communication, and continuous training reinforce the sustainability of Kaizen in hotel operations.

The research problem addressed in this study is how the implementation of Kaizen culture influences work effectiveness in the Food & Beverage Service of Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel. The objective of the study is to analyze the implementation of Kaizen in daily operations and assess its contribution to work effectiveness. Academically, this study contributes to the field of hospitality management, particularly the integration of Japanese work culture in enhancing service quality. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for hotel management in designing training programs, evaluations, and the development of a sustainable participatory work culture.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to explore and interpret the implementation of Kaizen culture in the Food & Beverage Service department of Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel. The qualitative paradigm is considered appropriate as it enables a deep understanding of organizational culture, employee behavior, and the contextual dynamics of continuous improvement within the hospitality industry (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The descriptive design focuses on presenting a detailed portrayal of real-world practices and processes, rather than testing hypotheses, making it suitable for assessing the embeddedness of Kaizen in service operations.

The research subjects consist of managers, assistant managers, and operational staff who were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in daily service management and participation in Kaizen-related activities. This purposive sampling technique ensures that informants possess relevant experiential knowledge and practical insights concerning the hotel's work culture and improvement initiatives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In total, the study involved eight informants: one restaurant manager, two assistant managers, three senior service staff, and two interns directly engaged in the Food & Beverage division.

Primary data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and participatory observation during the researcher's internship period at the hotel. The in-depth interviews allowed for an interactive dialogue and clarification of respondents' perceptions regarding Kaizen practices such as PDCA, 5S, and 3M applications. Each interview session lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted in both English and Japanese with interpretation assistance when needed. The participatory observation method enabled the researcher to capture natural work interactions, behavioral routines, and visual evidence of Kaizen implementation in real time, ensuring contextual validity (Yin, 2018).

Secondary data were obtained from hotel documents (e.g., SOP manuals, training records, and performance reports), published literature on Kaizen and hospitality management, and related archival materials. The triangulation of these data sources strengthened the depth and reliability of findings by allowing cross-verification between empirical observations, managerial reports, and theoretical frameworks.

The data collection techniques included:

1. Observation of operational activities, focusing on workflow organization, communication patterns, and workspace layout based on 5S principles.

2. Interviews on Kaizen practices, emphasizing the application of PDCA, teamwork participation, and continuous training mechanisms.
3. Visual documentation, including photographs and field notes detailing service processes and staff engagement during operational hours.

The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), which involves three concurrent stages:

1. Data reduction – selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data into meaningful categories related to Kaizen principles and work effectiveness indicators;
2. Data display – presenting analyzed data through matrices and thematic tables to identify recurring patterns and relationships among variables;
3. Conclusion drawing and verification – interpreting the data based on emerging themes and comparing them with relevant theories and prior studies to ensure analytical rigor.

To enhance data validity and trustworthiness, the study employed methodological triangulation, source triangulation, and member checking. Methodological triangulation was achieved by combining interviews, observations, and document analysis, while source triangulation involved verifying information from multiple informants across different job levels. Member checking was conducted by re-confirming the interpreted findings with key informants to ensure the accuracy and credibility of interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, the research process adhered to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' anonymity. The researcher's insider position as an intern was carefully managed to minimize bias through reflective journaling and ongoing supervision from academic advisors.

Overall, this methodological framework provides a robust foundation for exploring how the Kaizen culture operates within the hotel's Food & Beverage Service, uncovering both structural and behavioral dimensions of continuous improvement in a real hospitality setting.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The implementation of Kaizen culture in the Food & Beverage (F&B) Service department at Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel demonstrates a significant impact on work effectiveness, operational discipline, and service quality. The findings were analyzed thematically through the three core pillars of Kaizen—PDCA, 5S, and 3M—which collectively form an integrated system of continuous improvement. The discussion below presents an analytical interpretation of each concept in relation to the empirical findings and relevant theoretical frameworks.

### **1. Application of the PDCA Concept (Plan-Do-Check-Action)**

The study reveals that the PDCA cycle has been embedded as a routine managerial process in the daily operations of the F&B Service. This finding resonates with the Deming Quality Management Cycle, emphasizing that continuous improvement arises from systematic planning, execution, evaluation, and corrective action (Hill & Hill, 2020; Imai, 2021).

In the Plan phase, the restaurant management conducts detailed menu planning that accounts for diverse guest needs—including special dietary requests and food allergies—thereby reducing the likelihood of service errors and enhancing customer satisfaction. This

planning is data-driven and relies on customer feedback and prior performance evaluations, reflecting the *evidence-based decision-making* principle highlighted by Liker and Convis (2021). The Do phase involves executing service operations according to established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Observations showed that both employees and interns adhered strictly to procedural guidelines, ensuring consistency and efficiency. This consistency contributes to organizational reliability, a key determinant of perceived service quality (Kotler & Keller, 2020).

During the Check phase, daily evaluation meetings are held to review operational reports, guest comments, and performance indicators. These meetings serve as structured forums for reflection and learning, where employees can identify errors, share insights, and suggest process refinements.

Finally, the Action phase entails implementing corrective measures such as SOP revisions, targeted retraining, or communication adjustments to address recurring challenges. This adaptive process fosters *organizational learning* and supports the establishment of a self-regulated improvement culture. Empirically, the PDCA framework has contributed to faster service delivery, improved staff responsiveness, and enhanced capacity to resolve guest complaints efficiently.

These findings affirm prior research (Suárez-Barraza et al., 2021; Jovanović et al., 2025) that positions PDCA not merely as a technical tool but as a participatory process that builds shared responsibility and reflective thinking among hospitality workers. The study thus underscores PDCA's adaptability to dynamic, guest-facing environments—an area previously underexplored in service-oriented Kaizen applications.

## 2. Application of the 5S Concept (Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu, Shitsuke)

The 5S framework originating from Japanese industrial management has been effectively translated into the service operations of the hotel's restaurant division. This adaptation represents a contextual innovation, as 5S is often associated with physical production spaces rather than high-interaction service settings (Rauch & Linder, 2020).

The principle of Seiri (Sort) is manifested through the staff's ability to identify and retain only essential items in the workspace, eliminating clutter that could impede service efficiency. Seiton (Set in order) is applied through systematic arrangement of dining tools, glassware, and cutlery based on usage frequency, enabling quicker access during peak service times. Seiso (Shine) is practiced by ensuring cleanliness before and after each operational shift—an essential factor for hygiene compliance and positive guest perception (Farrington et al., 2018). Seiketsu (Standardize) is maintained through quarterly hygiene training sessions, reinforcing standardized procedures across teams and shifts. Finally, Shitsuke (Sustain or Discipline) reflects a culture of self-discipline and mutual accountability, where cleanliness and orderliness are maintained not through managerial enforcement but through shared values and peer expectations.

This comprehensive application of 5S not only enhances service efficiency but also strengthens teamwork and intrinsic motivation among employees. As evidenced by Ronny (2016) and later extended by Suárez-Barraza et al. (2021), the 5S system's emphasis on discipline and visual control directly contributes to error reduction and workplace satisfaction.



In the hospitality context, the findings indicate that 5S serves as a bridge between operational cleanliness and emotional engagement, fostering pride and ownership among staff members.

### 3. Elimination of 3M (*Muda*, *Mura*, *Muri*)

The 3M framework—targeting the elimination of waste (*Muda*), unevenness (*Mura*), and overburden (*Muri*)—was observed as a critical mechanism in optimizing workflow balance within the F&B department. This component of Kaizen addresses not only resource efficiency but also human well-being and workload management, aligning with the Toyota Production System (TPS) principles (Liker & Convis, 2021; Novaldi & Al Musadieq, 2018).

The reduction of *Muda* is achieved through optimized buffet layout design and proactive complaint handling, minimizing unnecessary motion, over-preparation, and time loss. *Mura*—or process inconsistency—is mitigated via equitable shift scheduling and workload distribution, preventing task accumulation and ensuring service uniformity. Meanwhile, *Muri*—employee overburden—is controlled through structured training and skill rotation, reducing fatigue and maintaining psychological balance.

These strategies yield measurable outcomes: reduced guest waiting times, smoother coordination during busy hours, and improved morale among service teams. Similar to findings by Rauch et al. (2020), the implementation of 3M principles demonstrates that lean management, when humanized, can enhance service agility and reduce stress without compromising hospitality's emotional dimension.

Nevertheless, challenges remain in sustaining these improvements, particularly in onboarding new staff who may initially struggle with the efficiency-oriented mindset of Kaizen. Continuous mentoring and cross-departmental collaboration are thus vital to ensure behavioral alignment and sustained improvement.

Table 1. Summary of Kaizen Implementation (PDCA, 5S, and 3M) and Its Impact on Service Performance

Kaizen Principle	Core Components / Activities Observed	Empirical Findings (Hotel Practice)	Impact on Service Performance	Supporting References
PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act)	- Daily <i>pre-shift</i> planning meetings- End-of-day review and feedback sessions- Corrective actions recorded weekly	- Continuous evaluation of service sequence and staff task flow- Mini-improvements proposed by staff (e.g., faster table resetting, beverage refill system)- Management responsiveness increased through real-time feedback	- Improved <i>reliability</i> and <i>responsiveness</i> in service delivery- Reduced guest waiting time by ~12% over 3 months	Imai (2021); Hill & Hill (2020); Liker & Convis (2021)
5S (Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu, Shitsuke)	- Sorting and labeling of utensils- Rearranging service areas based on workflow- Regular	- Decluttered and standardized workstation setup- Reduced time spent locating items- Enhanced cleanliness during buffet and banquet operations	- Enhanced <i>efficiency</i> , <i>safety</i> , and <i>guest perception</i> of professionalism- Fewer operational errors during peak hours	Carnerud & Bäckström (2018); Suárez-Barraza et al. (2021)

	cleaning and inspection routines			
3M (Muda, Mura, Muri)	- Regular Kaizen meetings identifying waste-Workload balancing between morning and evening shifts-Optimization of material use	- Reduced beverage waste by ~15% (3-month period)-Workload balance improved, decreasing overtime by 10%-Developed collective problem-solving culture among staff	- Enhanced consistency and teamwork effectiveness-Promoted proactive mindset and reduced inefficiency	Rauch et al. (2020); Creswell & Poth (2018); Yin (2018)

Source : Data Analisis, 2025.

#### 4. Supporting Factors and Challenges

Several factors emerged as critical enablers of Kaizen implementation success. Top management commitment ensures that improvement initiatives receive adequate resources and follow-up actions. Open communication channels—through daily meetings and suggestion systems—facilitate knowledge sharing and encourage bottom-up feedback, echoing the participatory management principles discussed by To (2025). Continuous training and skill upgrading maintain staff readiness and adaptability amid changing guest expectations.

However, the main challenge lies in fostering collective awareness and intrinsic motivation to pursue improvement voluntarily, without external pressure. In the hospitality context, where service quality depends on emotional engagement and teamwork, sustaining Kaizen requires aligning technical routines with affective values such as empathy, pride, and mutual trust.

The findings thus suggest that Kaizen's success in service industries extends beyond process optimization—it embodies cultural transformation. When internalized, Kaizen nurtures a participatory environment characterized by respect, accountability, and continuous learning. This aligns with the broader literature on *Lean Hospitality*, which emphasizes human-centered improvement systems as the cornerstone of sustainable service excellence (Farrington et al., 2018; Rauch et al., 2020).

#### Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the integration of PDCA, 5S, and 3M in the F&B Service department forms a complementary framework of operational discipline, efficiency, and learning. These pillars function synergistically: PDCA drives strategic learning cycles, 5S ensures environmental and procedural order, and 3M enhances resource efficiency and employee well-being. The result is a holistic Kaizen system that transforms routine work into a culture of collective excellence.

Theoretically, this study extends Kaizen literature by demonstrating its transferability from manufacturing to hospitality, providing empirical evidence that Kaizen can thrive in high-contact service environments when adapted through participatory leadership and cultural alignment. Practically, the study contributes to managerial insights on how to sustain

continuous improvement through a balance of discipline, motivation, and communication in the hospitality sector.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of Kaizen culture—through the principles of PDCA, 5S, and 3M—significantly enhances work effectiveness in the Food & Beverage Service department at Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel, Okinawa, Japan. The findings reveal that Kaizen, when adapted to a service-based context, not only optimizes operational efficiency but also strengthens employee motivation, teamwork, and customer satisfaction.

The PDCA cycle provides a structured mechanism for continuous reflection and problem-solving, fostering adaptive learning and accountability among staff. The 5S framework ensures environmental order, hygiene, and operational discipline, thereby enhancing service consistency and professionalism. Meanwhile, the 3M elimination process contributes to resource efficiency and workload balance, ensuring both physical and mental well-being of employees.

Collectively, these three pillars form a holistic improvement system that transforms Kaizen from a set of managerial tools into an organizational culture embedded in daily service routines. The successful integration of Kaizen at Rizzan Sea-Park Tancha-Bay Hotel demonstrates that continuous improvement philosophies originating from manufacturing can be effectively transferred to the hospitality industry—provided they are contextualized to accommodate human interaction, service dynamics, and emotional labor.

Furthermore, the study confirms that Kaizen's sustainability depends heavily on top management support, participatory leadership, open communication, and continuous training. The consistent application of these factors allows Kaizen to evolve beyond procedural efficiency into a long-term cultural transformation that strengthens service quality and organizational learning.

## Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, this study extends the body of knowledge on Kaizen and Lean Management by validating their transferability to high-contact service environments, a context that has been relatively underexplored in prior literature (Farrington et al., 2018; Jovanović et al., 2025). It demonstrates that Kaizen's technical principles—traditionally applied to manufacturing—can also function as socio-cultural mechanisms that foster collective learning, emotional engagement, and quality assurance in hospitality operations.

The integration of PDCA, 5S, and 3M provides an analytical framework for understanding how *continuous improvement* can manifest at both the behavioral and structural levels of a service organization. This supports the argument of Suárez-Barraza et al. (2021) that Kaizen represents not only a productivity model but also a *learning system* that nurtures reflective thinking and participatory collaboration.

By emphasizing the interplay between organizational discipline (5S) and human adaptability (PDCA and 3M), the study bridges the theoretical gap between *Lean Operations* and *Service Quality Management*. It suggests that the Kaizen philosophy, when viewed as a dynamic



socio-technical system, can strengthen the foundations of *Total Quality Management (TQM)* within the hospitality sector.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings yield several practical implications for hospitality practitioners and policymakers:

1. **Embedding Continuous Improvement in Training Programs:**  
Hotel management should institutionalize Kaizen-based training that promotes PDCA cycles and 5S routines as part of employee onboarding and performance evaluation systems. This ensures that improvement habits are internalized from the earliest stage of employment.
2. **Developing Participatory Leadership Models:**  
The success of Kaizen in this study highlights the importance of inclusive management, where decision-making is decentralized, and staff are empowered to identify and solve operational problems. Such a participatory approach enhances ownership and motivation.
3. **Enhancing Workplace Well-being:**  
By systematically applying 3M elimination principles, hotels can reduce workload imbalance and stress, improving both service quality and employee retention.
4. **Integrating Kaizen into Hotel Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):**  
The adoption of PDCA and 5S frameworks into daily SOPs can create measurable improvements in hygiene, efficiency, and service responsiveness, leading to sustained guest satisfaction.
5. **Cross-Cultural Management Adaptation:**  
For international hotel chains operating in multicultural environments, this study underscores the need to tailor Kaizen implementation according to cultural norms, communication styles, and motivational structures of diverse workforces.

These implications underscore Kaizen's role as a strategic management philosophy, rather than a mere operational technique, supporting long-term competitiveness and resilience in the global hospitality sector.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Despite its valuable insights, this study has several limitations that offer opportunities for future research. First, the scope of research was limited to a single hotel, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should include multiple hotel settings across different countries to capture cross-cultural variations in Kaizen implementation.

Second, the qualitative design, while providing rich contextual understanding, limits the ability to quantify the magnitude of Kaizen's impact on performance indicators such as service speed, customer satisfaction scores, and turnover rates. Subsequent research could adopt mixed-method or quantitative approaches to measure these effects statistically.

Third, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the sustainability of Kaizen practices over time, particularly in relation to employee motivation and innovation capacity. Furthermore, comparative analyses between Kaizen-based management and alternative

improvement frameworks (e.g., Six Sigma or Agile Hospitality) could offer deeper insights into strategic effectiveness within diverse organizational contexts.

Ultimately, examining the psychosocial aspects of Kaizen—such as emotional labor, cultural adaptation, and team cohesion—may enhance the understanding of how continuous improvement philosophies intersect with human factors in service industries.

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