

LEAD IN ASIA 2024 PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Wednesday 27 Nov 2024	
16:30 – 17:00	Registration
17:00 – 18:30	Welcome Drinks & Canape (Pullman hotel lawn area)

Thursday 28 Nov 2024					
8:00 – 8:30	Registration				
8:30 – 8:45	Opening Remarks <i>Sen Sendjaya, RMIT University</i>				
8:45 – 10:45	Keynote 1 (Gianyar Room) Crafting A Systematic Literature Review Article for Management/OB Journals: A Best Practice Guide <i>Alex Newman, University of Melbourne</i>				
11:00 – 11:30	Morning Tea				
11:30 – 13:00	Parallel Session 1				
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Leadership and Gender (Gianyar Room) <i>Chair: Mulyadi Robin, Australian Institute of Business</i></th> <th style="width: 50%;">Leadership and Organisational Behaviour (Kuta Room) <i>Chair: Ruchi Sinha, Nanyang Technological University</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>Preferred leaders in crisis versus non-crisis situations: The influence of leader gender and leaders' risk-taking behavior <i>Agung Minto Wahyu*, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Ghina Hanifah, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Corina D. Riantoputra, Universitas Indonesia</i></p> <p>Exploring the impact of women's representation and economic contribution: Evidence from Indonesia <i>Rachmad Kresna Sakti, Universitas Brawijaya</i> <i>Axellina Muara Setyanti, Universitas Brawijaya</i> <i>Anastasia Rasia Rahma Kresiadanti*, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Rofikoh Rokhim, Universitas Indonesia</i></p> </td> <td> <p>Breaking the glass ceiling of women in male-dominated occupations through fun human resource practices: A self-determination perspective <i>Tianyi Long*, University of Western Australia</i> <i>Zhou Jiang, RMIT University</i> <i>Ran Xiao, Renmin University</i> <i>Lijing Zhao, Hainan University</i></p> <p>Combating workplace loneliness with play-at-work: Implications for organisational practice <i>Hardik Bhimani*, RMIT University</i> <i>Caitlin Yolland, University of Adelaide</i></p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Leadership and Gender (Gianyar Room) <i>Chair: Mulyadi Robin, Australian Institute of Business</i>	Leadership and Organisational Behaviour (Kuta Room) <i>Chair: Ruchi Sinha, Nanyang Technological University</i>	<p>Preferred leaders in crisis versus non-crisis situations: The influence of leader gender and leaders' risk-taking behavior <i>Agung Minto Wahyu*, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Ghina Hanifah, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Corina D. Riantoputra, Universitas Indonesia</i></p> <p>Exploring the impact of women's representation and economic contribution: Evidence from Indonesia <i>Rachmad Kresna Sakti, Universitas Brawijaya</i> <i>Axellina Muara Setyanti, Universitas Brawijaya</i> <i>Anastasia Rasia Rahma Kresiadanti*, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Rofikoh Rokhim, Universitas Indonesia</i></p>	<p>Breaking the glass ceiling of women in male-dominated occupations through fun human resource practices: A self-determination perspective <i>Tianyi Long*, University of Western Australia</i> <i>Zhou Jiang, RMIT University</i> <i>Ran Xiao, Renmin University</i> <i>Lijing Zhao, Hainan University</i></p> <p>Combating workplace loneliness with play-at-work: Implications for organisational practice <i>Hardik Bhimani*, RMIT University</i> <i>Caitlin Yolland, University of Adelaide</i></p>
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	<p>The association between inclusive leadership and pro-social rule breaking: Gender as moderator <i>Gina Purwaningtias, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Debora Eflina Purba*, Universitas Indonesia</i></p> <p><i>Navigating the corporate labyrinth: The challenges of female migrant executives in Australia</i> <i>Mulyadi Robin*, Australian Institute of Business</i> <i>Mahan Poorhosseinzadeh, Edith Cowan University</i> <i>Sehrish Shahid, RMIT University</i> <i>Christiana Osei Bonsu, Australian Institute of Business</i></p>	<p>The effect of normative feedback types on task performance: Moderating role of task orientation across cultures <i>Hamidreza Harati*, RMIT University</i></p> <p>Leadership emergence in hybrid contexts: An investigation of emergent leaders' behaviors, followers' perception, and virtuality <i>F. Nabila Sudarko, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Corina D. Riantoputra, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Sen Sendjaya, RMIT University</i></p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:00	Parallel Session 2	
	<p>Leader Identity (Gianyar Room) <i>Chair: Michelle Gibbings, Change Meridian</i></p> <p>The construction of positive leader identity: The role of developmental job challenges and proteges' network <i>Thelma Ghinaya*, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Dewi Syarifah, Universitas Airlangga</i> <i>Felicity Pascoe, Indonesia Australia Partnership for Infrastructure</i> <i>Corina D. Riantoputra, Universitas Indonesia</i></p> <p>Enact it until you become it: How and when voice behavior affects leader identity <i>Tina Davidson, Erasmus University</i> <i>Sofya Isaakyan*, Erasmus University</i> <i>Ronit Kark, Bar-Ilan University</i> <i>Hannes Leroy, Erasmus University</i></p>	<p>Leadership in Context (Kuta Room) <i>Chair: Ricky, Petra Christian University</i></p> <p>Addressing the underrepresentation of Asian minorities in leadership: A review of the "Bamboo Ceiling" and framework of its antecedents <i>Jessica Yustantio, University of Sydney</i></p> <p>Leadership in military: Is there a place for shared leadership? <i>Ahmad Trisuhadiana*, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Erry R. Hidayat, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Endang Parahyanti, Universitas Indonesia</i> <i>Corina D. Riantoputra, Universitas Indonesia</i></p> <p>Facilitating Kaizen: The role of support leadership in enhancing team learning, empowerment and continuous improvement within the Manufacturing Sector in Malaysia <i>Agnes Lim Siang Siew*, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak</i> <i>Marc Lim Weng, Sunway University</i></p>

	Am I a leader? the construction of positive leader identity in women leaders <i>Dewi Syarifah*</i> , Universitas Indonesia <i>Felicity Pascoe</i> , Indonesia Australia Partnership for Infrastructure <i>Thelma Ghinaya</i> , Universitas Indonesia <i>Corina D. Riantoputra</i> , Universitas Indonesia	
15:00 – 15:30	Afternoon tea	
15:30 – 16:30	Parallel Session 3	
	<p>Digital Strategy and Capability (Gianyar Room) <i>Chair: Corina D. Riantoputra</i>, Universitas Indonesia</p> <p>Driving digital transformation: How to lead and build capabilities <i>Samuel Gyamerah</i>, RMIT University <i>Leila Afshari*</i>, RMIT University <i>Dennis Asante</i>, Flinders University</p> <p>Leadership ability: A critical factor in achieving strategic renewal through strategic agility and digital readiness <i>Erwin Tenggono*</i>, Universitas Indonesia</p> <p>Conceptualizing business acumen: A dynamic capability for uncertain times <i>Afreen Huq*</i>, RMIT University <i>Ashenafi Biru</i>, RMIT University <i>David Gilbert</i>, Monash University</p>	<p>Leadership in the Classroom (Kuta Room) <i>Chair: Debora E. Purba</i>, Universitas Indonesia</p> <p>Hardiness, optimism and hope: Multi-wave studies of how individuals may build resilience through experiential university undergraduate courses <i>Paul Lim*</i>, Singapore Management University <i>Chin Heng Low</i>, Australian National University <i>Kevin Koh</i>, Singapore Management University</p> <p>The impact of chain of servant leadership on the effectiveness of classroom instruction, an evident from Indonesia <i>Ricky*</i>, Petra Christian University <i>Lusi Hapsari Restulingtyas</i>, Petra Christian University <i>Zeplin Jiwa Husada Tarigan</i>, Petra Senior High School 3</p>
18:30 – 20:30	Conference Dinner (Montage, Pullman hotel restaurant)	

Friday 29 Nov 2024			
8:00 – 8:30	Registration		
8:30 – 10:30	Keynote 2 (Gianyar Room) Leadership Effectiveness in the Age of AI <i>Ruchi Sinha, Nanyang Technological University</i>		
10:30 – 11:00	Morning tea		
11:00 – 13:00	Keynote 3 (Gianyar Room) The Art and Science of Courageous Conversations <i>Michelle Gibbings, Change Meridian</i>		
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		
14:00 – 15:00	Parallel Session 4 – Paper Presentation		
	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Entrepreneurship (Gianyar Room) <i>Chair: Afreen Huq, RMIT University</i></p> <p>The effect of entrepreneurial and digital competencies on entrepreneurial career aspirations <i>Michael Ricky Sondak*, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Retno Ardianti, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Serli Wijaya, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Liauw Toong Tjiek (Aditya Nugraha), Petra Christian University</i></p> <p>The role of social media for value co-creation by women entrepreneurs in a rural area <i>Retno Ardianti*, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Miryam Grace Massie, Petra Christian University</i></p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Transformational Leadership (Kuta Room) <i>Chair: Paul Lim, Singapore Management University</i></p> <p>The Influence of transformational leadership on teaching behaviour mediated by the entrepreneurial behaviour, evidence from Indonesia <i>Rini Puspitawati, Petra Pre-K and Kindergarten</i> <i>Ricky*, Petra Christian University</i></p> <p>The influence of transformational leadership on employee performance through work engagement at May Star restaurant employees in Surabaya <i>Andrew James Sutjioadi, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Christian, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Yudianto Oentario, Petra Christian University</i></p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Entrepreneurship (Gianyar Room) <i>Chair: Afreen Huq, RMIT University</i></p> <p>The effect of entrepreneurial and digital competencies on entrepreneurial career aspirations <i>Michael Ricky Sondak*, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Retno Ardianti, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Serli Wijaya, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Liauw Toong Tjiek (Aditya Nugraha), Petra Christian University</i></p> <p>The role of social media for value co-creation by women entrepreneurs in a rural area <i>Retno Ardianti*, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Miryam Grace Massie, Petra Christian University</i></p>	<p>Transformational Leadership (Kuta Room) <i>Chair: Paul Lim, Singapore Management University</i></p> <p>The Influence of transformational leadership on teaching behaviour mediated by the entrepreneurial behaviour, evidence from Indonesia <i>Rini Puspitawati, Petra Pre-K and Kindergarten</i> <i>Ricky*, Petra Christian University</i></p> <p>The influence of transformational leadership on employee performance through work engagement at May Star restaurant employees in Surabaya <i>Andrew James Sutjioadi, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Christian, Petra Christian University</i> <i>Yudianto Oentario, Petra Christian University</i></p>
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15:00 – 15:30	Afternoon Tea & Concluding Remarks		

Facilitating Kaizen: The Role of Support Leadership in Enhancing Team Learning, Empowerment and Continuous Improvement within the Manufacturing Sector in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to identify the mediating effect of support leadership on the relationship between team learning, empowerment and Kaizen (continuous improvement) within the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. Although the significance of Kaizen in improving organisational performance is well-documented, the specific dynamics in terms of how team learning and empowerment contribute to this process and the role of support leadership have yet to be clearly understood. Addressing this research gap, a quantitative survey was conducted and gathered 161 responses from employees actively involved in Kaizen projects. The analysis reveals that support leadership significantly mediates the relationship between team learning and empowerment with Kaizen, highlighting its crucial role in fostering continuous improvement. These insights offer valuable implications for manufacturing firms aiming to enhance their Kaizen initiatives, suggesting that fostering support leadership can increase the benefits of team learning and empowerment, ultimately driving more effective and sustainable

improvements. This research provides a strategic framework for Kaizen practitioners and strategic leaders to leverage leadership support in optimising Kaizen efforts.

INTRODUCTION

In the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) environment, the manufacturing sector must become more agile and innovative to remain competitive. Kaizen implementation is critical for operational excellence (Lleo et al., 2017). However, sustaining these systems and ensuring effective employee participation is challenging (Jurburg et al., 2017; Jurburg et al., 2018). These issues are also relevant to the manufacturing firms in Malaysia striving for process improvement to compete globally. Kaizen not only improves productivity and quality but also offers strategic competitive advantages by fostering dynamic capabilities (Lizarelli, de Toledo & Alliprandini, 2021). Successful implementation requires active employee involvement, effective leadership, and robust communication (Jurburg et al., 2018). This study investigates the mediating effect of supportive leadership on the relationship between dialogue inquiry, team learning, empowerment, and Kaizen within the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. The study aims to provide insights into how supportive leadership can enhance employee involvement and sustain Kaizen initiatives, leading to operational excellence and competitive advantage for higher overall productivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Implementing Kaizen systems is essential for achieving operational excellence in the manufacturing sector (Lleo et al., 2017). Kaizen remains a potent method for driving process excellence and competitive advantage through continuous, incremental improvements (Lizarelli et al., 2021). However, sustaining these systems and ensuring active employee

participation is challenging (Jurburg et al., 2017; 2018). The Resource-Based View (RBV) offers a theoretical framework for investigating how support leadership mediates the relationship between dialogue inquiry, team learning, empowerment, and Kaizen within the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. RBV suggests that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage is derived from unique resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). In the context of this study, support leadership is a strategic resource that enhances organisational capabilities towards continuous improvement and innovation. This study highlights the crucial role of support leadership in driving Kaizen initiatives, providing insights into improving practices within Malaysian manufacturing firms.

Hypothesis Development

Effective communication facilitates knowledge sharing, which is crucial for the success of Kaizen (Akmal et al., 2021). Similarly, Marin-Garcia et al. (2018) identified communication, culture, and leadership as key enablers for Kaizen from the perspective of operators. Rave et al. (2023) reinforced these findings, highlighting the necessity of leadership, organisational communication, and employee involvement. As such, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: There is a significant relationship between dialogue inquiry and Kaizen practices.

Team learning supports collaborative problem-solving which is essential for Kaizen. Stimec (2020) pointed out team learning is critical for Lean Manufacturing and Kaizen. In contrast, poor learning management can lead to defensive teams and Kaizen failures. Chen et al. (2012) also argued that teamwork, leadership, openness to discussion, and employee involvement are vital for continuous improvement. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: There is a significant relationship between team learning and Kaizen practices.

Empowerment fosters ownership and proactive participation in Kaizen. Al-Rjoub et al. (2023) found a strong link between empowerment and Kaizen in healthcare. Kong et al. (2022) and van Assen (2018) also showed that empowering leadership positively influences Lean practices

and motivates employees to actively participate in improvement projects (Jones et al., 2022).

Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3: There is a significant relationship between empowerment and Kaizen practices.

Supportive leadership provides the necessary environment for Kaizen by offering guidance, encouragement, and resources. Ingelsson and Martensson (2014) observed higher levels of support leadership and continuous improvement in groups using Lean methodologies. Similarly, Tortorella et al. (2021) emphasised that leadership support is crucial in sustaining Kaizen efforts. Berhe et al. (2020) and Kharub et al. (2023) also highlighted the impact of supervisory conduct on the success of Kaizen. Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: There is a significant relationship between support leadership and Kaizen practices.

Chinoperekweyi et al. (2022) emphasised the role of leadership in sustaining strategic change through organisational learning and Kaizen. This aligns with past studies that revealed the link between organisational learning, Kaizen, and leadership in fostering a learning culture and improving quality performance (Kortsch et al., 2023; Narayanan & Rajaratnam, 2019; Ni & Sun, 2009). In addition, Yang et al. (2004) identified that support leadership mediates the relationship between dialogue inquiry, empowerment, and financial performance. Sun et al. (2008) and Wang et al. (2024) also reported that support leadership and team learning contribute to continuous improvement. Furthermore, Raub et al. (2024) discovered that servant leadership positively impacts psychological empowerment, which is crucial for sustaining Kaizen activities. Therefore, it was hypothesised that support leadership mediates the relationship between dialogue inquiry, team learning, empowerment, and Kaizen by fostering an environment conducive to continuous improvement and innovation:

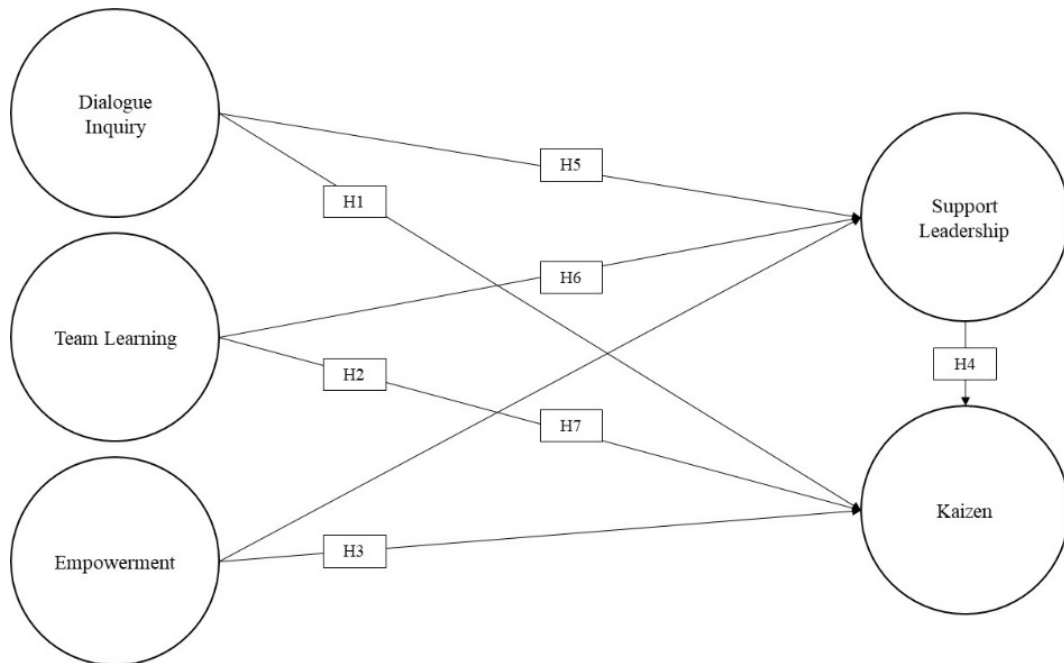
H5: Support leadership mediates the relationship between dialogue inquiry and Kaizen practices.

H6: Support leadership mediates the relationship between team learning and Kaizen practices.

H7: Support leadership mediates the relationship between empowerment and Kaizen practices.

Research Framework

Figure 1
Research Framework



METHOD

This quantitative survey research investigates the mediating effect of support leadership on the relationship between dialogue inquiry, team learning, empowerment, and Kaizen in Malaysia's manufacturing sector. Using purposive sampling, the study distributed structured questionnaires to employees of eight Lean manufacturing firms registered with the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC), resulting in 161 valid responses, exceeding the required sample size of 85 (Faul et al., 2009). The questionnaire assessed dialogue inquiry, team learning, empowerment, and support leadership using validated scales from the Dimension of Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) by Marsick and Watkins (2003). Measures for Kaizen practices were adapted from Sun et al. (2008) and Chauhan and Singh (2012) based on the criteria for Kaizen practices as proposed by the original proponent (Imai, 1986). Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4, a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation

Modeling tool, chosen for its ability to handle latent variables and non-normal data distributions (Chin et al., 2003; Ramayah et al., 2018; Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2024).

DATA ANALYSIS

To address potential Common Method Bias from single-source data, this study followed Kock's (2015) recommendation by conducting a full collinearity test. This process involved regressing all variables against a common variable, with a VIF threshold of ≤ 5 to indicate the absence of significant bias from single-source data. The analysis showed VIF values below 5, confirming that single-source bias is not a significant concern in the dataset (see, Table 1).

Table 1
Full Collinearity Testing

Variable	Dialogue Inquiry	Team Learning	Empowerment	Support Leadership	Kaizen
VIF	3.783	3.829	3.779	3.580	2.665

Measurement Model

The developed model is validated with a two-step approach, as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing's (1988). First, the measurement model is assessed for instrument validity and reliability, following guidelines from Hair et al. (2022) and Ramayah et al. (2018). The assessment includes loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). Acceptable criteria are loadings ≥ 0.5 , AVE ≥ 0.5 , and CR ≥ 0.7 . As indicated in Table 2, all AVE values surpassed 0.5, all CR values exceeded 0.7, and most loadings were above 0.708 (Hair et al., 2022).

In the second step, discriminant validity is assessed using the HTMT criterion proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) and updated by Franke and Sarstedt (2019). HTMT values ≤ 0.90 or a 95% upper bound of the confidence interval < 1 indicate acceptable discriminant validity. As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values were below 0.90 except for the HTMT between Team

Learning and Dialogue Inquiry, where the HTMT bootstrapping result showed an upper limit below 1. This confirms that discriminant validity is established according to the HTMT_Inference criterion, indicating distinctness among the five constructs. In conclusion, both validity tests demonstrate that the measurement items are valid and reliable, affirming that respondents understood the distinctiveness of the constructs.

Table 2
Measurement Model

Variables	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Dialogue Inquiry	DI_1	0.717	0.622	0.920
	DI_2	0.821		
	DI_3	0.833		
	DI_4	0.751		
	DI_5	0.820		
	DI_6	0.775		
	DI_7	0.794		
Team Learning	TL_1	0.870	0.650	0.928
	TL_2	0.765		
	TL_3	0.858		
	TL_4	0.851		
	TL_5	0.805		
	TL_6	0.752		
	TL_7	0.730		
Empowerment	EP_1	0.812	0.675	0.935
	EP_2	0.753		
	EP_3	0.791		
	EP_4	0.826		
	EP_5	0.851		
	EP_6	0.878		
	EP_7	0.834		
Support Leadership	SL_1	0.837	0.724	0.959
	SL_2	0.878		
	SL_3	0.840		
	SL_4	0.840		
	SL_5	0.857		
	SL_6	0.864		
	SL_7	0.830		
	SL_8	0.838		
	SL_9	0.870		
Kaizen	CI_1	0.699	0.542	0.943
	CI_2	0.733		

CI_3	0.748
CI_4	0.713
CI_5	0.686
CI_6	0.697
CI_7	0.662
CI_8	0.766
CI_9	0.779
CI_10	0.820
CI_11	0.852
CI_12	0.810
CI_13	0.651
CI_14	0.654

Table 3
Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Dialogue Inquiry					
2. Team Learning	0.910				
3. Empowerment	0.848	0.824			
4. Support Leadership	0.811	0.815	0.848		
5. Kaizen	0.714	0.749	0.786	0.757	

Structural Model

Multivariate skewness and kurtosis were assessed in accordance with Hair et al. (2022) and Cain et al. (2017) recommendations. The results showed non-normality with Mardia’s multivariate skewness ($\beta = 11.845, p < 0.01$) and Mardia’s multivariate kurtosis ($\beta = 64.744, p < 0.01$). Subsequently, path coefficients, standard errors, t-values, and p-values for the structural model were reported using a resample bootstrapping procedure with 10,000 samples (Ramayah et al., 2018). Addressing criticisms by Hahn and Ang (2017) regarding the sole use of p-values for hypothesis testing, a combination of criteria including p-values, confidence intervals, and effect sizes was employed, as summarised in Table 4.

The effects of the predictors on Kaizen were examined. The results of the analysis reveal an R^2 of 0.625 ($Q^2 = 0.567$) indicating that the predictors collectively explained 62.5% of the variance in Kaizen. Team Learning ($\beta = 0.232, p = 0.046$), Empowerment ($\beta = 0.341, p < 0.01$) and Support Leadership ($\beta = 0.286, p = 0.015$) were all positively correlated to Kaizen, supporting

H2, H3, and H4, respectively. However, Dialogue Inquiry ($\beta = -0.020$, $p = 0.494$) showed no significant relationship with Kaizen, and thus H1 is rejected.

Bootstrapping was used to assess mediation hypotheses for indirect effects, with significance indicated when the confidence interval did not include zero (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; 2008). As shown in Table 5, Team Learning \rightarrow Support Leadership \rightarrow Kaizen ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.011$) and Empowerment \rightarrow Support Leadership \rightarrow Kaizen ($\beta = 0.327$, $p = 0.001$) both exhibited significant mediation. Bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals confirmed these findings, with no intervals including zero, thus supporting H6 and H7. However, Dialogue Inquiry \rightarrow Support Leadership \rightarrow Kaizen ($\beta = 0.137$, $p = 0.214$) did not show statistical significance, leading to the rejection of H5.

Table 4
Hypothesis Testing Direct Effects

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-values	p-values	BCI LL	BCI UL	f ²	Decision
H1	Dialogue Inquiry → Kaizen	-0.020	0.152	0.015	0.494	-0.295	0.212	0.000	Reject
H2	Team Learning → Kaizen	0.232	0.138	1.685	0.046	0.011	0.462	0.039	Accept
H3	Empowerment → Kaizen	0.341	0.075	4.531	p< .001	0.216	0.464	0.090	Accept
H4	Support Leadership → Kaizen	0.286	0.132	2.169	0.015	0.051	0.473	0.065	Accept

Note: We use 95% confidence interval with a bootstrapping of 10,000

Table 5
Hypothesis Testing Indirect Effects

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-values	p-values	BCI LL	BCI UL	f ²	Decision
H5	DI → SL → CI	0.137	0.110	1.243	0.214	-0.098	0.332	0.019	Reject
H6	TL → SL → CI	0.201	0.079	2.545	0.011	0.048	0.355	0.040	Accept
H7	EP → SL → CI	0.327	0.095	3.443	0.001	0.151	0.520	0.107	Accept

Note:

1. DI: Dialogue Inquiry; TL: Team Learning; EP: Empowerment; SL: Support Leadership; CI: Kaizen
2. We use 95% confidence interval with a bootstrapping of 10,000

In addition, following Shmueli et al.'s (2019) suggestion, the PLSpredict method was applied, using a holdout sample-based approach to generate case-level predictions for items or constructs through PLS-Predict with a 5-fold procedure to assess predictive relevance. Shmueli et al. (2019) proposed that if all item differences (PLS-LM) are lower, it indicates strong predictive power; if all are higher, predictive relevance is not confirmed; a majority lower suggests moderate predictive power; and a minority lower suggests low predictive power. As shown in Table 6, all errors of the PLS model were lower than those of the LM model, indicating strong predictive power for the model ($Q^2 = 0.544$).

Table 6
PLS-Predict

Item	$Q^2_{predict}$	PLS RMSE	LM RMSE	PLS-LM RMSE
CI_1	0.285	0.778	0.843	-0.065
CI_2	0.276	0.759	0.808	-0.049
CI_3	0.190	0.774	0.796	-0.022
CI_4	0.235	0.709	0.821	-0.112
CI_5	0.239	0.740	0.773	-0.033
CI_6	0.215	0.860	1.003	-0.143
CI_7	0.214	0.825	0.926	-0.101
CI_8	0.419	0.745	0.781	-0.036
CI_9	0.432	0.653	0.692	-0.039
CI_10	0.388	0.653	0.737	-0.084
CI_11	0.414	0.678	0.750	-0.072
CI_12	0.360	0.675	0.698	-0.023
CI_13	0.204	0.820	0.918	-0.098
CI_14	0.179	0.815	0.959	-0.144

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationships between dialogue inquiry, team learning, empowerment, support leadership, and Kaizen within Malaysia's manufacturing sector. Team learning was found to positively influence Kaizen, stressing the importance of collective learning processes in fostering continuous improvement. This aligns with Stimec's (2020) study that emphasised the need for team learning indicators alongside

Lean Management for continuous improvement, as failures in managing learning can result in defensive teams. The findings of this study also reinforced Chen et al.'s (2012) emphasis on the essential roles of teamwork, leadership, and employee involvement in continuous improvement efforts.

Similarly, the result of this study is consistent with Al-Rjoub et al. (2023), who found a strong connection between employee empowerment and Kaizen in healthcare, and Jones et al. (2022), who stressed the importance of active employee participation in improvement projects. Empowerment notably influences Kaizen, highlighting the critical role of empowered employees in fostering innovation and improving quality at work (Kong et al., 2022).

The study also revealed a significant positive relationship between support leadership and Kaizen, highlighting the essential role of leadership support in fostering and maintaining continuous improvement efforts (Berhe et al., 2020). These findings are consistent with the notion that support leadership encompassing leadership communication (Wang et al., 2023), supervisor conduct, team autonomy (Kharub et al., 2023), and higher management support (Ingelsson & Martensson, 2014; Tortorella et al., 2021; van Assen, 2018b) contribute positively to the effectiveness and continuity of Kaizen and Lean practices.

Contrary to expectations (H1), dialogue inquiry did not show a significant direct relationship with Kaizen. This might be due to several factors needing further exploration. Kaizen often requires a structured approach to continuous improvement, possibly relying less on informal dialogue. Malaysian organisations may emphasise structured methodologies and process improvements over informal dialogue for Kaizen (Bakar et al., 2017; Salleh et al., 2015). Employees involved in Kaizen projects might prioritise measurable outcomes like process efficiency, waste reduction, and quality improvements, favouring operational metrics and structured problem-solving (Habidin & Yusof, 2013; Nordin et al., 2010) over informal dialogue. Cultural norms and organisational structures in Malaysian manufacturing may also

prioritise hierarchical decision-making and formalised improvement processes (Jayaraman et al., 2012), affecting how dialogue inquiry is perceived and integrated into Kaizen practices. Future research should further explore these factors to understand how dialogue inquiry can be effectively integrated into Kaizen practices to enhance continuous improvement efforts.

The mediation analysis revealed another important finding that there is a significant indirect effect of team learning and empowerment on Kaizen through support leadership, supporting hypotheses H6 and H7. This suggests that support leadership acts as a mediator, enhancing the relationship between team learning, empowerment, and Kaizen implementation. Leadership practices fostering a supportive team and empowering organisational climate are crucial for Kaizen initiatives. The current findings empirically build upon previous studies (Chen, 2023; Chiu, Lin & Ostroff, 2021; Koeslag-Kreunen et al., 2021; Sánchez-Cardona, Soria & Llorens-Gumbau, 2018) highlighting the importance of leadership in fostering team learning. These studies support the idea that supportive leadership, by promoting intellectual stimulation and encouraging transformational behaviours within teams, acts as a mediator enhancing the relationship between team learning and successful Kaizen implementation.

Building on Wang et al. (2024) findings, which emphasise that supportive leadership promotes psychological empowerment, this study also highlighted the crucial role of support leadership as a mediator in enhancing the connection between empowerment and effective Kaizen implementation. Furthermore, the empirical findings of this study, which indicate that support leadership plays a mediating role in connecting empowerment to successful Kaizen practices, reinforce Mi et al.'s (2024) idea that perceived institutional empowerment positively influences shared leadership through mechanisms involving organisational support.

In summary, investing in leadership development programs that emphasise supportive and empowering leadership styles can enhance organisational capabilities for continuous improvement. Besides, promoting team learning through structured learning opportunities and

knowledge-sharing platforms can directly improve Kaizen implementation. Creating opportunities for employee empowerment through autonomy, decision-making authority, and support can stimulate innovation and quality improvements.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study investigates the connections between team learning, empowerment, support leadership, and Kaizen implementation within manufacturing firms in Malaysia. The results indicate that team learning significantly improves Kaizen outcomes, highlighting its importance for organisational adaptability and learning capabilities. Empowerment emerged as a critical factor, as empowered employees demonstrate greater initiative and involvement in Kaizen activities, fostering innovation and quality enhancements. Most importantly, support leadership plays a key role in enhancing both team learning and empowerment, thereby enabling successful Kaizen implementation. Framing these findings through the RBV, it becomes evident that support leadership acts as a valuable intangible resource that significantly enhances an organisation's competitive advantage. By fostering a culture of team learning and empowerment, support leadership improves operational capabilities and contributes to sustained organisational performance and innovation. This reinforces the notion that leadership is not just a management function but a strategic asset within the RBV framework, essential for leveraging other organisational resources effectively. Practically, organisations should invest in leadership development initiatives that cultivate supportive and empowering leadership practices. These should enhance team learning capabilities, foster employee empowerment, and promote a Kaizen culture. Future research should explore additional aspects of support leadership's impact on Kaizen, including contextual factors, long-term sustainability, and cross-cultural implications, providing a comprehensive understanding of support leadership in various organisational settings.

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