



ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome

ISSN: 2351-0617 (print), ISSN: 2408-2058 (electronic)

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ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome Vol 13(1) pp. 33-66

<https://assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/odijournal>

Published by the
Organization Development Institute
Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management
Assumption University Thailand

ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome
is indexed by the Thai Citation Index and ASEAN Citation Index

Motivation, Emotional Intelligence, Work Ethics and Job Performance: An Action Research in a Small-Medium Enterprise in Yangon, Myanmar

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Received: 2 December 2024. Revised: 30 December 2024. Accepted: 18 February 2025

Abstract

The purpose of this action research study is to improve employees' job performance using Organizational Development interventions to enhance their motivation, emotional intelligence, and work ethics in a small-medium enterprise in Yangon, Myanmar. Guided by frameworks such as SOAR and the Weisbord Six-Box Model, the study employs a mixed-method approach, incorporating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to diagnose organizational challenges and implement tailored development interventions. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using means, standard deviations, and paired sample t-tests. Data was analyzed using means, standard deviations and paired sample t-tests, to evaluate employees' work ethics, motivation, emotional intelligence and employee job performance. For qualitative methods, data were collected using semi-structured interviews to understand the current situation of Nature's Own Company Limited in Yangon, Myanmar and identify key areas of improvement to improve employee job performance. Key findings demonstrate that targeted ODIs implemented helped enhance emotional intelligence, foster ethical work practices, and strengthen intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation, and significantly improved employee performance. The research further emphasizes the critical role of strategic alignment between organizational goals and employee development in cultivating a productive and engaged workforce. By presenting a structured approach to organizational development interventions, this study offers practical insights for fostering sustainable growth and competitive advantage in similar organizational contexts.

Keywords: Work Ethics, Emotional Intelligence, Motivation, Job Performance, Organizational Development

Introduction

The increasing importance of employee performance in achieving organizational success has become a focal point in today's competitive landscape. Organizations recognize that motivated, emotionally intelligent, and ethically driven employees are critical for driving productivity and fostering innovation. This study is situated within the context of a small-medium enterprise in Yangon, Myanmar, where challenges such as limited resources, evolving market demands, and workforce development have necessitated organizational development interventions (ODIs) to enhance job performance.

Industry Background in National Context

In Myanmar, processed fruits products (example: fruit jams) only make up a tiny percentage of the total agri-food exports. The main export product for the agri-food sector in Myanmar from 2010 to 2014 has been processed nuts although the export value for it fell sharply from 2015 onwards. Jam businesses are always experimenting with new products to replace the use of seasonal fruits. Although it was handmade traditionally in the past, jam is now increasingly made with machinery that is imported from China. Furthermore, some fruit jam companies in Yangon now buy fruits at the Yangon fruits market instead of getting into contractual agreements with fruit farmers from rural areas. Although Myanmar has potential to develop the country's fruit product manufacturing industry for jams and juices, the total agri-food export growth for manufactured fruit products in Myanmar should not be overestimated due to the country's current market size for manufactured fruit products (Diao et al., 2020). The jam industry in Myanmar has faced notable changes in recent years, with imports decreasing by 32.7% in 2022 compared to the previous year, and Thailand and China being the primary suppliers (IndexBox, 2023). This decline followed a peak in 2020, where imports had surged by 126% to 1,400 tons. The average export price for non-citrus fruit or nut jams and marmalades in 2023 was \$539 per ton, reflecting a 14% increase from the previous year. However, this price remains significantly lower than the peak observed in 2021 (IndexBox, 2023).

Contexts Related to the Variables of Nature's Own Company Limited

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a significant determinant of workplace success globally. Research by Freedman and Fariselli (2016) highlights that individuals in Europe with high emotional intelligence (EQ) are 8.1 times more likely to excel in effectiveness, relationships, well-being, and quality of life, making EQ a strong predictor of future success. Key EQ competencies identified include engaging intrinsic motivation (driven by personal values), pursuing noble goals (working with purpose), and exercising optimism (maintaining positivity and hope). Myanmar's collectivist culture emphasizes the importance of interpersonal harmony; however, employees often face challenges in expressing emotions openly. This cultural restraint can impede effective stress management and conflict resolution. Introducing emotional intelligence training is vital to help employees navigate these challenges, fostering healthier workplace relationships (Sang & Fang, 2019). While Nature's Own benefits from a family-like culture, challenges such as communication gaps and stress management issues persist. Training in emotional intelligence can equip employees with the tools to better manage stress, develop empathy, and improve interpersonal interactions, thereby strengthening teamwork. This action research examines the role of EI in fostering self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills among employees within the Myanmar SME context.

Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a crucial role in determining employee engagement and productivity. A 2021 EUPAN survey conducted by the Portuguese Presidency across 27 EU Member States, the European Commission, and seven additional countries revealed key motivational drivers for public administration employees (Ganhão et al., 2021). The survey found that 56% of participants strongly agreed that work-life balance is a significant motivator, while 48% cited meaningful work and good coworker relationships, and 46%

emphasized job security. Extrinsic motivational factors included work-life balance, job security, empowerment from managers, and flexible working hours. Intrinsic factors highlighted were relationships with colleagues and managers, meaningful work, and commitment to public service mission. As the labor market evolves, younger employees in Myanmar are increasingly seeking work-life balance, recognition, and opportunities for professional growth. To improve employee retention and job satisfaction, employers must align their motivational strategies with these evolving aspirations (YCP, 2018). The current reward system at Nature's Own has been identified as insufficient, contributing to low levels of employee engagement. By addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, such as implementing personalized recognition programs and offering professional development opportunities, the company can enhance performance, boost employee morale, and improve retention rates. This action research evaluates how motivational drivers can be leveraged to align individual goals with organizational objectives.

The 2013 South African Business Ethics Survey by the Ethics Institute of South Africa found that employees in organizations with a strong ethical culture are more likely to report ethical issues (71% vs. 48% in weak cultures) (Groenewald & Geerts, 2013). While 91% of respondents acknowledged future workplace ethical challenges, only 31% believed their organizations had clear policies to address them, and two-thirds identified these issues as a significant concern. Four factors driving ethics in the future workplace included legal and compliance requirements (43.93%), AI adoption (35.51%), external stakeholder pressure (33.64%), and changes in workforce composition (27.10%). Additionally, 90% of respondents felt that organizations bear primary responsibility for managing ethical challenges. Traditional cultural values in Myanmar, such as respect, accountability, and community, shape ethical behavior in the workplace. However, the absence of structured frameworks and clear policies within many SMEs hinders consistent adherence to ethical standards. Establishing formal ethics training programs is essential for promoting trust and organizational cohesion (Yatu, 2019). Given the company's reliance on manual processes and its close-knit team structure, ethical decision-making is essential for maintaining trust and ensuring operational efficiency. Structured ethics training is necessary to promote collaboration, enhance decision-making, and align behavior with organizational values. This action research explores how fostering a culture of ethical behavior within the focal organization can contribute to better decision-making, enhanced teamwork, and overall organizational success.

D'Alo et al. (2017) investigated the link between employee performance and compensation, advising against tying performance reviews to base salary increases due to the weak correlation between job satisfaction and performance. Instead, they proposed alternative strategies to enhance performance, including clear communication about base salary, aligning salaries with market indicators, separating performance discussions from pay, disclosing salary ranges for transparency, and offering customized salary contracts. The study emphasized that intrinsic motivation is a stronger driver of performance than extrinsic motivation. Variable incentives within a flexible remuneration framework were recommended to reinforce positive behaviors and drive business growth. Specific recommendations included rewarding strong performers throughout the year, empowering managers to provide tailored incentives,

rewarding employees based on credible performance data, and equipping leaders with skills for effective remuneration discussions. Job performance in Myanmar is influenced by leadership styles and cultural values. Leadership, particularly laissez-faire, has a significant impact on employee performance in the food and beverage industry. Additionally, the collectivist culture of Myanmar, which prioritizes interpersonal harmony, also shapes workplace dynamics and overall job performance (Htun et al., 2024). This action research provides actionable insights for enhancing employee performance of employees at Nature's Own through targeted Organizational Development Interventions (ODIs). Improving job performance at Nature's Own is crucial for sustaining growth and staying competitive in the market. It ensures that employees contribute effectively to the company's goals, leading to higher productivity, better product quality, and increased customer satisfaction.

Focal System

Nature's Own Jam, produced by Kaung Food Factory Company Limited, is a family-owned business based in Yangon, Myanmar. The company operates a jam production facility with 30 employees. Founded in 2002, it produces a variety of jams in flavors such as strawberry, pineapple, and orange, using natural preservatives. The jams are available in sizes of 50kg, 3 kg, 400g, and 215g. While the main production season is in July, small batches are occasionally made throughout the year. Nature's Own jams are distributed nationwide, reaching hotels, supermarkets, and local shops across Myanmar, including major hotels in Yangon.

Nature's Own Company Limited and the SOAR Model

The application of SOAR Analysis (Stavros et al., 2003) offers a structured framework for highlighting the organization's core competencies and potential areas for development while maintaining a forward-looking, strengths-based approach. SOAR Analysis comprises of strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results and it helps identify the areas of strategic growth for organizations (Jacobs & Kaplan, 2016).

Strength - Nature's Own benefits from a strong sense of community, fostered by close-knit working relationships and empathetic leadership. Employees display emotional resilience, adaptability, and technical expertise, which enhance their ability to meet operational demands. The top management, characterized by visionary leadership, empowers employees through support and recognition, creating a family-like work culture.

Opportunities – There are opportunities for Nature's Own to diversify its product lines, potentially expanding into related markets such as wine production. Additionally, initiatives to improve emotional intelligence through structured training programs, enhance work ethics, and motivate employees can lead to significant performance gains. Building synergy between employees and management remains a key area for growth.

Aspirations – Nature's Own aspires to improve job performance by enhancing work ethics, emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, social management, and relationship management), and motivation. These efforts aim to foster an environment conducive to employee growth and organizational success.

Results - The desired outcomes include a collaborative and ethical work culture, significant personal and career development for employees, and increased profitability driven by improved employee performance. These results aim to establish a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and its workforce.

Nature's Own Company Limited and Weisbord Six-Box Model

The Weisbord Six-Box Model was employed to examine key organizational components, identifying systemic issues and areas for targeted intervention. It also serves as a diagnostic tool to assess six organizational dimensions to identify systemic issues of Nature's Own Company Limited (Burke, 2017).

Purpose - While employees understand the organization's short-term goals, the lack of a clearly defined mission and vision hinders alignment with long-term strategic objectives. This gap creates ambiguity in roles and reduces employee motivation to engage with organizational priorities.

Structure - The organizational structure supports communication; however, misalignments and inefficiencies persist. Employees expressed a preference for informal structures that foster open communication and trust. Nevertheless, this informality occasionally undermines accountability and adherence to ethical standards.

Relationships - Interpersonal dynamics within the organization are challenged by siloed operations and miscommunication. Strengthening relationships through improved communication and collaboration is critical to fostering a cohesive and productive workforce.

Leadership - Leadership practices require a stronger focus on inclusivity, emotional intelligence, and empathy. Managers must play a proactive role in addressing employee concerns, promoting transparency, and driving engagement.

Rewards - The absence of robust recognition and reward systems has negatively impacted employee morale and motivation. Developing transparent performance evaluation mechanisms and tailored incentive programs is recommended.

Helpful Mechanisms: Existing policies and resources need enhancement to ensure consistency in work ethics, support effective performance, and streamline processes. Strengthening these mechanisms will enable employees to perform their roles more effectively.

Statement of the Problem

Nature's Own Jam, a small-medium enterprise in Yangon, Myanmar, faces critical challenges that impede employee job performance. These challenges include low levels of emotional intelligence, inconsistent work ethics, and inadequate motivation among employees. The absence of a clear mission and vision further exacerbates these issues, leading to misaligned goals, reduced employee engagement, and inefficiencies in collaboration and communication. Additionally, the lack of robust reward systems and leadership practices hinders the organization's ability to foster a supportive and motivating work environment. Addressing these interconnected issues requires a structured and holistic approach through Organizational

Development Interventions (ODIs) to align employee capabilities with organizational objectives, ultimately improving overall performance.

A comprehensive preliminary diagnosis of Nature's Own, a small-medium enterprise in Yangon, Myanmar, was conducted to identify organizational challenges and opportunities. Two analytical frameworks were utilized: SOAR Analysis and the Weisbord Six-Box Model. These frameworks provided an integrated understanding of the organizational environment, focusing on internal strengths and growth opportunities.

Research Questions

1. What is the current situation of work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), motivation, and job performance of the employees at Nature's Own?
2. What are the appropriate organization development interventions (ODIs) to increase job performance by enhancing work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), and motivation?
3. What are the differences in work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), motivation, and job performance between the Pre-ODI and Post-ODI?
4. What insights can be gained regarding work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), motivation, and job performance of employees at Nature's Own based on the interview for qualitative research?
5. What strategic plan can be crafted based on the mixed method findings?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the current situation of work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), motivation, and job performance of the employees at Nature's Own.
2. To design and implement Organization Development Interventions (ODIs) on work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), and motivation to job performance.
3. To determine the differences in work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), motivation, and job performance between the Pre-ODI and Post-ODI.
4. To gain insights on work ethics, emotional intelligence (EI), motivation, and job performance of employees at Nature's Own based on the interviews for qualitative research.
5. To design a strategic plan based on the juxtaposed qualitative and quantitative findings.

Literature Review

This section elaborates on the research variables and provides theoretical support; while also discussing the current research status focusing on factors such as work ethics, emotional intelligence, motivation, and employee job performance. Furthermore, this section includes a theoretical framework, a conceptual framework, and designs an action research framework based on related theories, concepts, and methodologies. These frameworks elucidate intervention activities for the pre-ODI, ODI, and post-ODI phases of this action research, offering a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the research problem.

Work Ethics

Jensen and Meckling's Principal-Agent Theory (Gauld, 2016) provides a foundational framework for understanding the alignment of interests between employers (principals) and employees (agents). This theory emphasizes the inherent challenges organizations face in ensuring that employees act in ways that align with organizational objectives. By promoting ethical behavior, such as accountability, transparency, and integrity, organizations can minimize conflicts of interest and foster trust, leading to improved performance. When employees internalize these ethical values, it reduces monitoring costs and enhances organizational cohesion, creating a culture where decision-making is guided by shared principles rather than external enforcement. The theory underscores the importance of ethical practices in mitigating agency problems and ensuring employees' goals complement those of the organization, thus driving sustainable growth.

Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman's Four Branch Model of emotional intelligence emphasizes the four quadrants of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management. These quadrants outline the critical components that enable individuals to understand and manage their emotions and interact effectively with others (Boyatzis et al., 2000).

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to understand one's emotions and their effects on decision-making.

- **Self-regulation:** Managing emotional responses to avoid impulsive actions while maintaining adaptability.

- **Social awareness:** Empathy and understanding of others' emotional states, which is essential for effective workplace interactions.

- **Relationship management:** Building strong interpersonal relationships, resolving conflicts, and fostering teamwork.

The competency model derived from Goleman's work highlights four key dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management, which are pivotal for effective leadership and fostering collaborative environments. These competencies underscore the transformative role of emotional intelligence in workplace success.

Motivation

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory categorizes workplace factors into hygiene factors and motivators, emphasizing their distinct roles in employee satisfaction and performance (Nickerson, 2023).

- **Hygiene factors:** These include salary, job security, working conditions, and company policies. Their absence causes dissatisfaction but does not inherently motivate employees.

- **Motivators:** Factors such as recognition, achievement, responsibility, and personal growth that actively drive employee engagement and productivity.

Herzberg's theory emphasizes the need for organizations to address both hygiene factors to create a baseline of employee satisfaction and motivators to cultivate a sense of purpose and fulfillment. This theory asserts that by integrating these elements into workplace policies and practices, organizations can create the workplace environment where employees are both content and driven to perform at their best.

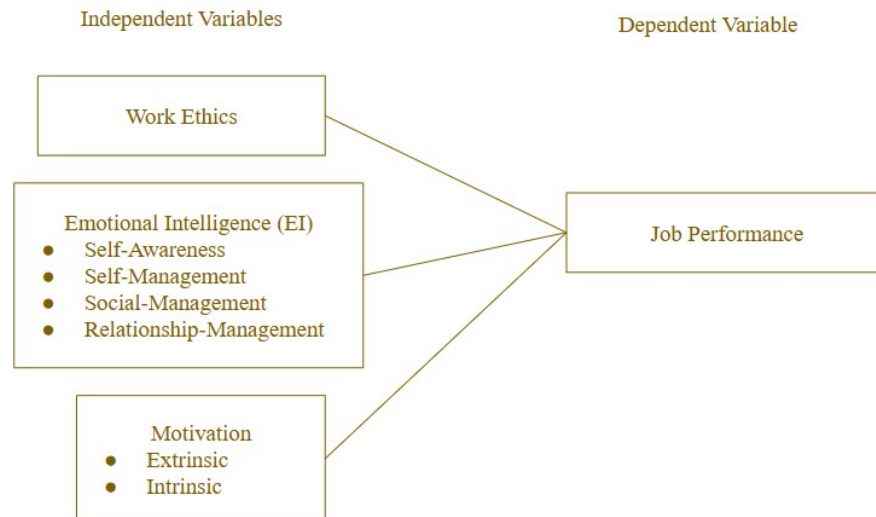
Job Performance

Campbell's Model of Individual Performance provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors influencing job performance across various roles. The model identifies eight key dimensions: technical performance, which relates to fulfilling job-specific technical and interpersonal requirements; communication, highlighting the importance of effectively conveying information; and initiative, persistence, and effort, reflecting behaviors like extra effort and adaptability. It also addresses counterproductive work behavior (CWB), which harms organizational goals, and leadership at various levels, including supervisory and hierarchical roles. Peer/team-member leadership and management emphasize collaboration, motivation, and team efficiency, while hierarchical management performance focuses on resource utilization to achieve goals. This model highlights that job performance is multifaceted, encompassing technical, interpersonal, and behavioral aspects, all influenced by the specific organizational context (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015).

Conceptual Framework in Research

This study presents a conceptual framework with job performance as the dependent variable (DV) and motivation, work ethics, and emotional intelligence (EI) as independent variables (IVs), where each IV plays a significant role in enhancing job performance. The researcher developed this conceptual framework based on historical research studies and the needs of Nature's Own Company Limited. Research supports that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation significantly influence employee engagement and job performance.

The objective of this research is to gain understanding of employees regarding their motivation level, work ethics level, emotional intelligence level and factors relating to these variables that can ultimately enhance employee job performance based on the SOAR and Weisbard 6 Boxes model analysis of the organization by improving motivation, work ethics and emotional intelligence levels of the employees. By addressing motivation, work ethics, and EI through targeted interventions, organizations can create a more engaged, ethical, and emotionally skilled workforce, directly enhancing job performance. Each IV provides a unique pathway to improve job performance, making it a holistic approach to organizational development. The proposed conceptual framework was verified with Nature's Own by developing a roadmap based on organizational diagnosis of the organization. The framework is as follows:

Figure 1*Conceptual Framework***Research Hypotheses**

H1o: There is no significant difference in work ethics between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

H1a: There is a significant difference on work ethics between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

H2o: There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence (EI) between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

H2a: There is a significant difference in emotional intelligence (EI) between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

H3o: There is no significant difference in motivation between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

H3a: There is a significant difference in motivation between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

H4o: There is no significant difference in job performance (JP) between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

H4a: There is a significant difference in job performance (JP) between Pre ODI and Post ODI.

Research Design

This action research utilizes mixed method research design and has three stages - 1) pre-ODI stage, 2) ODI stage and 3) post-ODI stage. This action research utilized a mixed method research design using both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Population and Research Samples

The entire population of 30 employees (N=30) were respondents for the survey questionnaire at the pre-ODI stage. The same questionnaire was used for the post-ODI with the same population of 30 employees. Mean and standard deviation from pre-ODI and post-ODI responses were used to conduct paired sample t-test. The sample for qualitative data used semi-structured interview (pre and post ODI) composed of 15 informants selected using purposive sampling method. All 30 employees also participated in all of the OD Interventions such as training, team building exercises, lectures, webinars, and workshops.

Research Methodology

Quantitative Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire of the study was administered twice – firstly in the initial pre-ODI stage of this action research to collect data before OD interventions take place to show the current levels of the variables. Then, the same questionnaire was administered again for the second time during the post-ODI stage to collect data after OD interventions to demonstrate post-ODI levels of the dependent and independent variables. The respondents' information was exclusively used for this study and remains confidential to ensure their anonymity.

Qualitative Research Instrument

Qualitative data was collected via instruments such as semi-structured interview, training, workshops, webinars, and team building exercises. Semi-structured interviews are a valuable instrument for qualitative research due to their flexibility. This approach allows researchers to maintain a structured framework while adapting to explore emergent themes (Kallio et al., 2016). It also enables the collection of rich, detailed data that captures participants' experiences and perspectives in depth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview questionnaires were:

WE Q1: Describe a time where you faced an ethical dilemma at work and observed unethical behavior by a coworker or supervisor? How did you approach the situation?

WE Q2: Describe a time when you had to confront a colleague or superior about an ethical issue. How did you approach the situation?

WE Q3: What would you do if you observed unethical behavior by a coworker or supervisor?

WE Q4: How do you handle situations where there is a conflict between your personal values and the expectations of your job? Were you ever tempted to compromise integrity; what did you do?

WE Q5: What steps do you take to maintain integrity and honesty in your work?

WE Q6: Can you give an example of a time when you had to adhere to a company policy or procedure even though it was challenging?

EI Q1: How do you remain calm and composed under pressure or in stressful situations?

EI Q2: How do you build and maintain positive relationships with coworkers, even in challenging circumstances?

EI Q3: Can you tell me about a time when you admitted a personal weakness?

EI Q4: How do you think your emotional intelligence (self-awareness, social-awareness, relationship-management, self-management) affect your job performance?

EI Q5: How can your organization support you in fostering your emotional intelligence at your workplace?

M Q1: What motivates you to do your best at work, and how do the things you find most rewarding contribute to that motivation?

M Q2: What motivates you to do your best at work, and how do the things you find most rewarding contribute to that motivation?

M Q3: How can your organization help increase your motivation?

JP Q1: How do you set goals for yourself, and what steps do you take to achieve them?

JP Q2: How do you collaborate with colleagues or team members to achieve a shared goal?

JP Q3: What metrics or indicators do you use to measure your own performance, and how do you track progress towards your goals?

Data Collection

For quantitative research, one questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents including: one general manager, three managers, twelve production and QC employees and fourteen sales & distribution employees, pre and post OD interventions. For qualitative research, interviews with 15 respondents selected using purposive sampling method (more than 3 years of working experience at Nature's Own Company Limited) from all 30 respondents was conducted to explore the current level of employee job performance in terms of the employees' current work ethics level, current emotional intelligence level, and current motivation level.

Reliability Test

The reliability of the pre-ODI survey questionnaire was tested by using Jamovi to measure Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951). The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to measure internal consistency and was regarded as reliable when the value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.7 or greater (Cronbach, 1951). To enhance the reliability of the survey questionnaire, it was first distributed to a sample of 30 employees from X Bank, representing different industries. This was done to ensure that the questionnaire is applicable and reliable even when used with a sample from various sectors.

Table 1

The Results of the Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha Obtained		Interpretation
Work Ethics	0.663	Moderate
Emotional Intelligence	0.799	High
Motivation	0.763	High
Job Performance	0.708	High

Table 1 shows the reliability analysis results of each variable in this study. A variable is considered reliable if the obtained Cronbach's alpha value is >0.70 (Cronbach, 1951). The results show that all items in the research instrument are reliable with values ranging from 0.663 to 0.799.

Validity Test

The researcher conducted an index of item objective congruence (IOC) validity test on the survey questionnaire items. The validity of this action research study was tested using Item Objective Congruence (IOC) by inviting five OD experts to grade each item of the questionnaire based on 1 point, 0 point or -1 point. All five OD experts were OD program lecturers that are in the OD Program. Having all five IOC experts from the field of Organizational Development (OD) lecturers ensures a high level of specialized expertise and a consistent foundation of knowledge relevant to the research topic. This approach reduces variability in interpretations and enhances the precision and reliability of the findings. The validity of the questionnaire items was assessed using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index, by adding scoring points of each item to get the mean value that was greater or equal to 0.66 threshold for item retention (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). The researcher removed and revised the items as advised by the OD experts.

Table 2

Design and Landscape of ODIs during the ODIs Period

Period	OD Intervention	Number of Participants
May 3rd, 2024 at Nature's Own Office	Work Ethics Training and Workshop Conducted by Researcher (Miss Laura Phyu Sin Win Maung)	4 Managers 12 Operation Staffs Total: 16 participants
May 5th, 2024 at Nature's Own Office	Work Ethics Training and Workshop Conducted by Researcher (Miss Laura Phyu Sin Win Maung)	14 Sales & Distributions Staffs Total: 14 participants
May 15th, 2024 at X bank Head Office and Virtually	Communications Skills Training and Workshop Conducted by Deputy CBO of A bank (Mr Waiyan Moe Thone Thann)	In-person: 14 Sales & Distributions Staffs Total: 14 participants Virtually: 4 Managers 12 Operation Staffs Total: 16 participants
May 19th, 2024 at X bank Head Office and Virtually	Communications Skills Training and Workshop Conducted by Deputy CBO of A bank (Mr Waiyan Moe Thone Thann)	In-person: 14 Sales & Distributions Staffs Total: 14 participants Virtually: 4 Managers 12 Operation Staffs Total: 16 participants

Period	OD Intervention	Number of Participants
May 24th, 2024 at Nature's Own Office	Appreciative Inquiry Workshop Conducted by Researcher (Miss Laura Phyu Sin Win Maung)	4 Managers 12 Operation Staffs Total: 16 participants
May 25th, 2024 at X bank Head Office	Appreciative Inquiry Workshop Conducted by Researcher (Miss Laura Phyu Sin Win Maung)	14 Sales & Distributions Staffs Total: 14 participants

Design and Implementation of ODI Work Ethics - Objectives of the ODI:

The objective of the Work Ethics ODIs was to enhance participants' understanding of workplace ethics and provide practical tools to apply ethical principles effectively. The interventions aimed to foster ethical collaboration, improve decision-making skills in ethical dilemmas, and support the organization in achieving its goals through the consistent practice of workplace ethics. A combined approach—reinforced with regular ethics training sessions and policy handbooks—ensures that employees not only know the rules but are also motivated to practice ethical behavior consistently. This alignment reduces misconduct, fosters trust, and enhances organizational reputation, which in turn improves employee morale and job satisfaction (Emtrain, 2024).

Activities for Work Ethics Day 1: Workshop (May 3, 2 hours)

The first intervention activity was a 2-hour interactive workshop focused on building a foundational understanding of workplace ethics. Participants explored key ethical principles, including autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, veracity, justice, accountability, and fidelity. Activities like the "Values Wall" and a YouTube clip titled "*We act with Integrity*" encouraged engagement and discussion about ethical practices.

The researcher fostered collaboration and interaction through icebreaker activities and encouraged voluntary sharing of examples to create an engaging learning experience. Questions were asked to evaluate understanding, and the participants were gradually encouraged to share their perspectives. Initially hesitant and shy, participants became more involved as the workshop progressed. The supportive environment allowed them to gain confidence in discussing ethical concepts. Participants reported increased confidence in handling ethical dilemmas and applying ethical principles in real-world scenarios. The researcher's logbook entries highlighted participants' improved understanding of ethics and readiness to act ethically in challenging situations.

Activities for Work Ethics Day 2: Workshop (July 7, 3 hours)

The second intervention activity expanded on ethical principles by incorporating the organization's policy handbook. It emphasized five key pillars of work ethics: responsibility, accountability, integrity, professionalism, and respect. Practical examples and a *Work Ethics* video reinforced the importance of following workplace policies while acting ethically.

The researcher highlighted policy guidelines, facilitated video-based discussions, and encouraged participants to share personal experiences. Voluntary engagement was emphasized to create an interactive learning environment, fostering a deeper connection to the material. The

sensitivity of the topic initially made participants hesitant. However, as the session progressed, they became more comfortable sharing ideas and engaging in discussions, aided by the researcher's interactive approach.

Participants gained clarity on workplace policies and ethical decision-making, feeling more confident in applying these principles. Feedback highlighted improved understanding of how to act ethically while adhering to organizational rules.

Emotional Intelligence - Objectives of ODI:

The Emotional Intelligence ODIs aimed to address employees' emotional challenges and enhance their emotional intelligence (EI). The sessions sought to improve mindfulness, self-awareness, and compassion, equipping participants with tools to manage negative emotions effectively. Research demonstrates that mindfulness meditation improves emotional clarity, decreases stress, and promotes better social skills, which are essential components of EI. Mindfulness-based interventions have also shown significant reductions in emotional exhaustion and improvements in emotional balance in both educational and healthcare settings (Jiménez-Picón et al., 2021).

Activities for Emotional Intelligence Day 1: Workshop (June 5, 3 hours)

A 3-hour session was conducted for managers and operations staff. The session focused on introducing mindfulness and compassion exercises to address emotional challenges and promote emotional intelligence. Participants attended a virtual lecture by Dr. Ashin Khammai Dhammasāmi (Oxford Sayadaw) titled “12 Mindful Compassion Exercises”. Oxford Sayadaw explained mindfulness techniques and emphasized cultivating compassion and loving-kindness for personal and professional growth. A 15-minute meditation exercise was incorporated to help participants practice mindfulness. During casual conversations with participants, several individuals mentioned that they incorporate meditation into their daily routines, typically practicing in the mornings before beginning their day. However, three participants disclosed that they had never practiced meditation prior to the sessions and found it initially challenging. Despite this, they reported that the guided meditation session led by Oxford Sayadaw significantly eased their experience, noting that they were so engaged they did not realize how quickly time had passed.

Initially, participants were reserved due to cultural norms in Myanmar, where openly discussing emotions is not customary. As a few participants began sharing their insights, others followed, fostering an open and interactive environment. Feedback demonstrated participants' appreciation for practical advice and the calming effects of meditation. Some shared that expressing their feelings brought emotional relief, while others noted improved stress management and a commitment to incorporating mindfulness into their daily lives.

Activities for Emotional Intelligence Day 2: Workshop (June 14, 3 hours)

The 3-hour follow-up session focused on managing negative emotions and fostering self-awareness. Dr. Ashin Khammai Dhammasāmi led a lecture titled “Mindfulness and Negative Emotion Management”, guiding participants on transforming negative emotions into positive thoughts through mindfulness. The session emphasized self-compassion, mindfulness, and emotional balance as tools for personal and professional growth. A 30-minute meditation

exercise was conducted to deepen participants' mindfulness practice. Employees were encouraged to ask questions and openly discuss their feelings, creating a safe and supportive environment.

Building on the prior workshop, participants showed greater confidence in discussing their emotions. Familiarity with emotional intelligence concepts facilitated a more dynamic and collaborative environment. Feedback highlighted significant growth in participants' understanding and application of mindfulness techniques. They noted an increased ability to manage negative emotions, achieve emotional balance, and incorporate meditation into their routines for sustained well-being.

Motivation - Objectives of ODI:

The motivation ODIs aimed to inspire participants to focus on strengths, foster a positive mindset, and develop practical goal-setting skills. The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) workshops encouraged reflection on achievements and envisioning positive outcomes, while the Goal Setting workshops introduced structured techniques to prioritize goals and translate them into actionable steps, motivating participants to achieve personal and professional growth. Implementing goal-setting training and appreciative inquiry (AI) workshops can enhance both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation by offering structure, recognition, and purpose-driven engagement. Goal-setting theory highlights that specific, measurable, and challenging objectives increase motivation by linking performance with rewards (Locke & Latham, 2019). Workshops that emphasize SMART goals provide employees with clarity and enable accountability, improving extrinsic motivation through performance-based recognition (Etactics, 2023).

Activities for Motivation Day 1: Appreciative Inquiry Workshop (May 24,25, 3 hours)

A 3-hour workshop conducted for managers, operations staff, and the sales and distribution (S&D) team, focused on using the strengths-based Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach to inspire positive change. The sessions introduced the 4D AI cycle (Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny/Delivery), fostering reflection on recent successes and envisioning ideal future scenarios. Participants identified strengths, shared positive experiences, and outlined small actions to move toward their vision.

Initially unfamiliar with AI concepts, participants gradually embraced the reflective exercises. The workshops had a lighter, more positive atmosphere compared to earlier emotional intelligence interventions, with participants smiling, laughing, and sharing openly. Feedback highlighted the sessions' uplifting nature, with participants expressing increased positivity, motivation, and eagerness for similar workshops.

Activities for Motivation Day 2: SMART Goal Workshop (June 11 & 12, 2 hours)

Conducted over 2 hours, these workshops introduced the SMART goal-setting framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to the S&D team and operations staff. The sessions emphasized breaking down big goals into smaller, actionable steps and provided guidance on setting clear, achievable objectives.

While participants grasped the SMART technique well, many struggled to break down their goals into smaller tasks. The researcher provided additional guidance, encouraging

participation by creating a judgment-free environment. Participants reported feeling more confident and motivated, noting that the framework helped make their goals more practical and achievable.

Activities for Motivation Day 3: Priority Pyramid Workshop (June 13 & 14, 2 hours)

A 1-hour session introduced the Priority Pyramid technique to help participants prioritize goals based on importance and urgency. Participants created their personal Priority Pyramid, listing top goals at the apex and supporting goals at the base, and identified actionable steps for one chosen goal.

Participants found the Priority Pyramid technique simpler and more engaging compared to the SMART method. The session's collaborative format encouraged active participation, with a positive and lighthearted atmosphere. Coworkers supported each other, laughing and sharing openly, which further boosted morale.

Job Performance - Objective of ODI:

The job performance ODIs aimed to enhance employee effectiveness and productivity by identifying and addressing performance gaps. It focuses on developing skills, fostering accountability, and aligning individual roles with organizational goals. This approach ultimately improves overall efficiency, job satisfaction, and organizational success. Integrating communication skills training with continuous improvement initiatives significantly enhances employee performance by fostering collaboration, engagement, and problem-solving abilities. Effective communication ensures that employees can share ideas openly, provide and receive constructive feedback, and resolve conflicts efficiently, thereby promoting smoother teamwork and higher productivity (Kaizen Institute, 2023; Leading Business Improvement, 2023).

1. Communications Skills Training: The objective was to enhance employee job performance by improving the ability to convey and receive information effectively, foster collaboration, and resolve conflicts constructively. The training aimed to strengthen skills in active listening, effective speaking, and non-verbal communication, thereby promoting professional interactions and career development.

2. Continuous Improvement Training: This workshop aimed to foster a culture of incremental change, feedback-driven refinement, and ongoing learning. The goal was to equip employees with the tools to identify areas of improvement, implement actionable plans, and measure performance effectively, contributing to both personal growth and organizational success.

Activities for Job Performance Day1: Communications Skills Training (May 15 & 19, 2 hours)

First Session: A 2-hour workshop introduced active listening as a foundational communication skill. The session featured an ice-breaker on sharing fun facts to foster a positive atmosphere, followed by a presentation on active listening techniques such as full attention, non-verbal cues, and empathy. Participants engaged in storytelling and reflection exercises to practice these skills.

Participants were highly engaged, sharing experiences openly and practicing attentiveness. Feedback emphasized the practical application of skills in workplace interactions,

with participants planning to implement techniques such as paraphrasing and empathetic listening.

Second Session: This session expanded on communication skills with a focus on effective speaking and non-verbal cues. Participants practiced delivering messages with attention to tone, pace, and body language through role-playing exercises.

Participants demonstrated enthusiasm and collaboration, learning to refine their verbal and non-verbal cues. Feedback reflected a deeper understanding of how tone, expressions, and words impact communication.

Activities for Job Performance Day2: Continuous Improvement Training (June 19, 2 hours)

First Session: A 2-hour session introduced principles of continuous improvement, such as incremental change, feedback loops, and ongoing learning. The facilitator highlighted tools like root-cause analysis, performance metrics, and KPIs. Participants applied these principles in a group exercise to address a hypothetical business challenge: increasing jam visibility in local stores.

The workshop encouraged collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Participants actively applied continuous improvement principles during group exercises, and feedback reflected their enthusiasm for personal and professional growth. Participants valued learning about performance metrics and KPIs, applying them to workplace scenarios.

Results and Discussion

The demographic data of 30 respondents from Nature's Own Company Limited comprised of 20 male employees (66.67%) and 10 female employees (33.33%). 12 (40%) of the respondents are aged between 31-40 years old and 10 (33%) are under 30 years old. Most of the respondents are Sales & Distributions employees (46.7%) and Final Production & Final QC team members (40.0%). 15 (50%) of the respondents are with more than 3 years of working experience at Nature's Own and 8 (26.6%) of them have 2-3 years of working experience at Nature's Own Company Limited. Nature's Own smaller manufacturing office in Yangon operates with just 30 employees excluding the two co-owners. There are 26 workers at the Yangon office with 12 team members in Production & QC Team and 14 team members in Sales & Distribution Team. There are three managers in total under General Manager and those 3 managers are HR Manager, Accounting Manager, and Factory Manager. The General Manager reports to 2 Co-Owners.

Descriptive Analysis of scale items pre-ODI and post-ODI

The quantitative data analysis results during pre-ODI and post-ODI stages are presented in the table below.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Work Ethics (WE) Scale Items*

Question	N	Pre-ODI Mean (5-point scale)	Post ODI Mean (5-point scale)	% Improvement (Pre vs. Post)
Being responsible and accountable, even when I have to admit that I'm wrong, is very important to me.	30	4.13	4.40	6.50%
I report unethical acts to appropriate management.	30	3.93	4.37	11.2%
It is more important for me to behave ethically than to get an advantage in life.	30	4.13	4.27	3.39%
Moral standards in my company are fully understood.	30	3.83	4.10	7.05%
Overall - Work Ethics (WE)	30	4.00	4.29	7.25%

Table 3 shows the obtained Mean for work ethics at pre and post ODI stages.

The overall mean score is 4.29 out of 5-point scale for work ethics (WE) after conducting the ODIs. It showed that the highest improvement made (11.2% improved) for WE is item #2 "I report unethical acts to appropriate management," which shifted from 3.93 to 4.37. Additionally, the second most improved item that increased to 7.05% from 3.83 to 4.10 is "Moral standards in my company are fully understood". Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents have improved their work ethics level.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Emotional Intelligence (EI) Scale Items*

Question	N	Pre-ODI Mean (5-point scale)	Post ODI Mean (5-point scale)	% Improvement (Pre vs. Post)
I recognize how my feelings impact my performance.	30	3.70	4.07	10%
I am aware of different aspects of my emotions.	30	3.80	4.03	6.05%
I am aware of my limitations and abilities.	30	4.03	4.27	5.96%
I manage my impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well.	30	3.73	3.67	-1.61%

Question	N	Pre-ODI Mean (5-point scale)	Post ODI Mean (5-point scale)	% Improvement (Pre vs. Post)
I keep my promises as part of my responsibility.	30	4.20	4.23	0.71%
I make sure to meet the objectives as per my job responsibility.	30	4.13	4.37	5.81%
I get along well with my colleagues.	30	3.93	4.10	4.33%
I willingly offer appropriate assistance to my colleagues.	30	4.03	4.23	4.96%
I find it is easy to empathize with other people's emotions regardless of different backgrounds or cultures.	30	3.63	4.10	12.95%
I am comfortable talking with anyone and get along with most people.	30	3.80	4.17	9.74%
I can deal with a different perspective of colleagues to get my job done.	30	3.70	4.00	8.11%
When I communicate with other people, I can understand them very well.	30	3.63	4.07	12.12%
I am good at handling problems that come up in my relationships with other people.	30	3.53	3.90	10.48%
I am comfortable talking with anyone and get along with most people.	30	3.80	4.17	9.74%

Table 4 shows the obtained Mean for emotional intelligence at pre and post ODI stages.

In terms of self-awareness, it showed that the highest improvement made (6.05% improved) for EI is item #1 “I recognize how my feelings impact my performance,” which shifted from 3.70 to 4.07. The second highest item that increased to 6.05% from 3.80 to 4.03 is “I am aware of different aspects of my emotions”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents have improved their overall emotional intelligence level, however, they need to work extra hard on being aware of their limitations and abilities.

The highest improvement made (5.81% improved) for EI in terms of self-management is item #3 “I make sure to meet the objectives as per my job responsibility,” which shifted from 4.13 to 4.37. However, the interesting finding is that item #1 decreased from 3.73 and 3.67 with no improvement made after the ODI intervention meaning that some employees cannot manage their impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well yet.

The highest improvement made (12.95% improved) in terms of Social Awareness (SoA) is item #3 “I find it is easy to empathize with other people's emotions regardless of different backgrounds or cultures” which shifted from 3.63 to 4.10. Additionally, the second highest item

with mild improvement was Item #2 that increased 4.96% from 4.03 to 4.23 are “I willingly offer appropriate assistance to my colleagues.”

The highest improvement made (12.12% improved) for EI in terms of RM is item #3 “When I communicate with other people, I can understand them very well,” which shifted from 3.63 to 4.07. The second item that increased 10.48% from 3.53 to 3.90. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents have improved their overall emotional intelligence level.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Motivation (M) Scale Items

Question	N	Pre-ODI Mean (5-point scale)	Post ODI Mean (5-point scale)	% Improvement (Pre vs. Post)
I am motivated to perform better by our reward system.	30	3.33	3.73	12.01%
I volunteer for extra assignments at work for myself and professional growth as well as for the organization's growth.	30	3.90	4.37	12.05%
I comply with rules and regulations at work.	30	4.13	4.40	6.54%
The challenges that my job provides motivates me to perform better.	30	3.90	4.27	9.49%
I work for the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges.	30	3.83	4.13	7.83%
I work because I derive much pleasure from learning new things	30	3.90	4.03	3.33%
I work hard for the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks.	30	4.03	4.43	9.93%

Table 5 shows the overall Mean for motivation at pre-ODI and post- ODI stages.

The mean scores for Motivation (M) in terms of Extrinsic Motivation (EM) after conducting the ODIs showed that the highest improvement made (12.05% improved) for EM is item #2 “I volunteer for extra assignments at work for myself and professional growth as well as for the organization's growth,” which shifted from 3.33 to 3.73. Similarly, the first item (“I am motivated to perform better by our reward system”) also achieved 12.01% improvement from 3.33 to 3.73. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents have improved their overall motivation level but particularly due to their reward system and their drive to improve their professional as well as personal growth.

The highest improvement made (9.93% improved) for Intrinsic Motivation (IM) is item #4 “I work hard for the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks.” which shifted from 4.03 to 4.43. Similarly, the first item (“The challenges that my job provides

motivates me to perform better.”) also achieved 9.49% improvement from 3.90 to 4.27. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents have improved their overall intrinsic motivation level due to the challenges they face and the satisfaction they get when they can successfully solve them.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Job Performance (JP) Scale Items

Question	N	Pre-ODI Mean (5-point scale)	Post ODI Mean (5-point scale)	% Improvement (Pre vs. Post)
My performance has continually improved.	30	3.90	4.13	5.90%
I combine the available resources very well to provide quality services.	30	3.90	4.23	8.46%
I take part in solving problems in my organization.	30	4.13	4.30	4.13%
I look for ways to improve my work performance.	30	4.17	4.40	5.52%
Overall: Job Performance (JP)	30	4.03	4.30	6.70%

Table 6 shows the overall Mean for job performance at pre-ODI and post-ODI stages.

The overall mean score for Job Performance (JP) after conducting the ODIs is 4.03 out of 5-point scale. It showed that the highest improvement made (8.46% improved) for JP is item #2 “I combine the available resources very well to provide quality services,” which shifted from 3.90 to 4.23. The other items that improved similarly (5.90% and 5.52%) are Item #1 (“My performance has continually improved.”) and Item #4 (“I look for ways to improve my work performance.”) from mean scores of 3.90 to 4.13 and from 4.17 to 4.40 respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents have improved their overall job performance level.

Table 7

Results of Paired Sample T-Test

Variable	Pre-ODI		Post-ODI		Mean Difference	P value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Work Ethics	4.01	0.551	4.28	0.370	-0.275	0.021
Emotional Intelligence	3.85	0.406	4.10	0.485	+0.247	0.049
Motivation	3.85	0.559	4.19	0.484	+0.339	0.020

Variable	Pre-ODI		Post-ODI		Mean Difference	P value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Job Performance	4.03	0.497	4.30	0.407	-0.275	0.020
*p<0.05 **p<0.01						

Table 7 shows that according to the results of the paired sample t-test, p value for Work Ethics is 0.021. Therefore, H1o that states “There is no significant difference in work ethics between pre and post ODI” is rejected.

The paired sample t-test result for emotional intelligence (pre and post ODI) shows that the p value is 0.049. Therefore, H2o that states “There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence between pre and post ODI” is rejected.

The paired sample t-test result for motivation (pre and post ODI) shows that the p value is 0.020. Therefore, H3o that states “There is no significant difference in motivation between pre and post ODI” is rejected.

The paired sample t-test result for job performance (pre and post ODI) shows that the p value is 0.020. Therefore, H4o that states “There is no significant difference in job performance between pre and post ODI” is rejected.

Table 8

Themes Generated Based on Qualitative Results

Variables	Themes
Work Ethics (WE)	<p>Theme 1: Better handling of ethical dilemmas and increased reporting of misconducts compared to before.</p> <p>Theme 2: Seeking professional help when dealing with ethical dilemmas and turning to their support system to seek advice.</p> <p>Theme 3: Improved conflict resolutions compared to before the ODI stage.</p> <p>Theme 4: Increased reporting of Unethical Behavior and misconduct to relevant teams and senior management compared to before the ODI stage</p> <p>Theme 5: Increased level of integrity, accountability, and transparency portrayed through open and transparent communications.</p> <p>Theme 6: Higher level of adherence to policies and procedures compared to before the ODI stage.</p> <p>Theme 7: Adhering to ethical principles and company policies to improve job performance.</p>
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	<p>Theme 1: Acknowledging weaknesses and areas for improvement demonstrates self-awareness.</p> <p>Theme 2: Having more self-awareness and seeking support from others.</p> <p>Theme 3: Open Communication aids in solving problems and prevents misunderstanding.</p> <p>Theme 4: Empathy and Understanding is crucial in relationship management.</p> <p>Theme 5: Collaboration and Teamwork are important in building strong relationships.</p> <p>Theme 6: Developing and maintaining a positive attitude.</p> <p>Theme 7: Harboring empathy towards others to resolve conflicts.</p> <p>Theme 8:</p>

Variables	Themes
	<p>Employees seem to harbor a great level of Self-Awareness and understand what EI is at the post-ODI stage.</p> <p>Theme 9: Employees seem to be able to manage Relationships better at post-ODI stage and are also able to stay composed under pressure.</p> <p>Theme 10: Employees have started practicing to effectively managing stress using methods from ODIs.</p> <p>Theme 11: Employees start implementing problem-solving and solution-focused approach at post-ODI stage.</p> <p>Theme 12: Employees want supportive and inclusive work environment.</p> <p>Theme 13: More training and development for emotional intelligence is needed from Nature's Own.</p>
Motivation (M)	<p>Theme 1: Recognition and rewards motivate the employees at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 2: Work environment and development opportunities motivate the employees at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 3: Personal Growth and Development motivates employees at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 4: Recognition and impact of their work motivates employees at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 5: Professional development and setting goals can help increase employees' motivation at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 6: Compensation and benefits can motivate employees at Nature's Own.</p>
Job Performance (JP)	<p>Theme 1: Goal setting and planning help employees achieve their goals. Employees use the SMART goal setting method shared in ODI.</p> <p>Theme 2: Through effective communication and collaboration, employees of Nature's Own strive to achieve common goals.</p> <p>Theme 3: Through teamwork and support for each other, employees of Nature's Own work on achieving common goals.</p> <p>Theme 4: Setting milestones to measure progress and track performance.</p> <p>Theme 5: Performance Metrics and evaluation are used by employees of Nature's Own to track progress and performance.</p>

Table 8 presents themes generated from coding of post-ODI qualitative results. Qualitative data was derived from semi-structured interviews, training, workshops, webinars, lectures, and team building exercises. Generated categories and themes based on these qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis by the three coders. Overall, all variables improved after the ODI. It is obvious that the interview informants agreed that ODI helped them improve work ethics, emotional intelligence, motivation and job performance. What's more, an agreement has been reached that these variables have an impact on improvement of employee job performance.

However, there are still improvements to be made as stated during the content analysis. For work ethics, one stated that "Employees may not break it but they will sometimes bend the rules" meaning that there is still work to be done so that all employees of Nature's Own follow the guidelines per the policy handbook. For emotional intelligence, one stated that "I don't have to admit my weaknesses to everyone." It could mean that the employee doesn't know one's own weakness or is reluctant to be vulnerable with their emotions. Even though it has improvements after ODI, Nature's Own still needs to ensure that its employees are fully self-aware by supporting them in learning that aspect.

For Motivation, “I am motivated to perform better by our reward system.” still ranks lowest in terms of its mean value both before and after ODI. This means that Nature’s Own needs to implement attractive and desirable reward systems that are in alignment with employees’ personal and professional values. Lastly, for Job Performance “My performance has continually improved.” ranks the lowest in terms of its mean value for both pre and post ODI stages. This may indicate that employees still struggle with measuring or tracking their own performance. Therefore, Nature’s Own should clearly communicate performance metrics to employees to clarify expectations, as recommended by some informants in the semi-structured interviews.

Table 9

Future Strategic Action Plan of Work Ethics Based on Juxtaposed Mixed Method Data Results

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
Work Ethics (WE)	“Moral standards in my company are fully understood.” 3.83	“Moral standards in my company are fully understood.” 4.10	Theme 1: Better handling of ethical dilemmas and increased reporting of misconducts compared to before. Theme 2: Seeking professional help when dealing with ethical dilemmas and turning to their support system to seek advice. Theme 3: Improved conflict resolutions compared to before the ODI stage. Theme 4: Increased reporting of Unethical Behavior and misconduct to relevant teams and senior management compared to before the ODI stage Theme 5: Increased level of integrity, accountability, and transparency portrayed through open and transparent communications. Theme 6: Higher level of adherence to policies	Enhance Work Ethics Training Implement advanced training programs focused on ethical decision-making and conflict resolution. Implement Reporting Mechanisms for Misconducts Develop and promote reporting systems that enable employees to easily report unethical behaviors. Ensure that employees are aware of how to use them. Reinforce Adherence to Company Policies Organize workshops that highlight the importance of compliance and how

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
			and procedures compared to before the ODI stage. Theme 7: Adhering to ethical principles and company policies to improve job performance.	adherence to policies contributes to the overall ethical level of the organization. Promote a Culture of Integrity and Transparency Promote workplace culture that values integrity and transparency through leadership examples, and recognition programs.

Table 9 presents future strategic action plan for work ethics based on the juxtaposed mixed method data results. For Work Ethics, the strategic action plan includes advanced training on ethical decision-making and conflict resolution, aimed at improving employees' handling of ethical dilemmas, conflict resolution, and reporting misconduct. A key recommendation is the implementation of reporting mechanisms to make it easier for employees to report unethical behavior and misconduct. Additionally, the researcher emphasizes the importance of reinforcing adherence to company policies through compliance workshops and promoting a culture of integrity and transparency, supported by leadership examples and recognition programs, as part of the strategic action plan. This strategic action plan is designed to build on the improvements observed post-ODI and further strengthen the ethical foundation, communication, and transparency within the organization.

Table 10

Future Strategic Action Plan of Emotional Intelligence Based on Juxtaposed Mixed Method Data Results

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	"I am good at handling	"I manage my impulsive	Theme 1: Acknowledging	Promote a Supportive Work

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
	problems that come up in my relationships with other people.” 3.53	feelings and distressing emotions well.” 3.67	<p>weaknesses and areas for improvement demonstrates self-awareness.</p> <p>Theme 2: Having more self-awareness and seeking support from others.</p> <p>Theme 3: Open Communication aids in solving problems and prevents misunderstanding.</p> <p>Theme 4: Empathy and Understanding is crucial in relationship management.</p> <p>Theme 5: Collaboration and Teamwork are important in building strong relationships.</p> <p>Theme 6: Developing and maintaining positive attitude.</p> <p>Theme 7: Harboring empathy towards others to resolve conflicts.</p> <p>Theme 8: Employees seem to harbor a great level of Self-Awareness and understand what EI is at the post-ODI stage.</p> <p>Theme 9: Employees seem to be able to manage Relationships better at post-ODI stage and are also able to stay composed under pressure.</p> <p>Theme 10: Employees have started practicing to effectively managing stress using methods from ODIs.</p> <p>Theme 11: Employees start implementing problem-solving and solution-focused approach at post-ODI</p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>Create a work culture that encourages open communications and regular feedback.</p> <p>Provide Mentorship and Coaching</p> <p>Create mentorship programs where experienced employees can provide guidance and support to others in improving their emotional intelligence.</p> <p>Promote Work-Life Balance</p> <p>Implement flexible working arrangements to help employees manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Provide resources for stress management to ensure employees can balance their professional and personal lives effectively.</p>

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
			stage. Theme 12: Employees want supportive and inclusive work environment. Theme 13: More training and development for emotional intelligence is needed from Nature's Own.	

Table 10 presents future strategic action plan for emotional intelligence based on the juxtaposed mixed method data results. The proposed strategic action plan for Emotional Intelligence (EI) focuses on enhancing key areas such as self-awareness, relationship management, and stress management. It includes fostering a supportive work environment by encouraging open communication and regular feedback to improve problem-solving and collaboration. The researcher also emphasizes the importance of creating mentorship programs, where experienced employees can guide others in developing emotional intelligence and managing relationships. Additionally, the researcher proposes promoting work-life balance through flexible work arrangements and stress management resources to help employees better manage emotional challenges. These actions aim to build on the improvements in EI, further strengthening communication, teamwork, and employee well-being.

Table 11

Future Strategic Action Plan of Motivation Based on Juxtaposed Mixed Method Data Results

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
Motivation	"I am motivated to perform better by our reward system." 3.33	"I am motivated to perform better by our reward system." 3.73	Theme 1: Recognition and rewards motivate the employees at Nature's Own. Theme 2: Work environment and development opportunities motivate the employees at	Provide trainings relating to professional development and goal-setting Develop and implement a professional

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
			<p>Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 3: Personal Growth and Development motivates employees at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 4: Recognition and impact of their work motivates employees at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 5: Professional development and setting goals can help increase employees' motivation at Nature's Own.</p> <p>Theme 6: Compensation and benefits can motivate employees at Nature's Own.</p>	<p>development program that includes training, mentorship, and career advancement paths.</p> <p>Provide more goal-setting training so employees feel empowered that their goals are achievable no matter how big they are.</p> <p>Implement Recognition Programs</p> <p>Establish a recognition program that includes regular performance reviews, acknowledgment of achievements, and rewards for exceptional performance. Provide quarterly feedback.</p> <p>Review and Adjust Compensation Packages</p> <p>Review salary and compensation/incentive packages to ensure they are competitive with industry standards and give bonuses to excellent performers to increase motivation.</p>

Table 11 presents future strategic action plan for motivation based on the juxtaposed mixed method data results. The proposed strategic action plan for motivation focuses on enhancing employee motivation through professional development, recognition, and competitive compensation. It includes implementing a comprehensive professional development program with training, mentorship, and clear career advancement opportunities, as well as offering goal-setting workshops to help employees set and achieve their objectives. Additionally, the researcher proposes establishing a formal recognition system, including regular performance reviews, acknowledgment of achievements, and rewards for exceptional performance, to foster a culture of appreciation. Lastly, the researcher suggests reviewing and adjusting compensation and incentive packages to ensure they are competitive with industry standards, with performance-based bonuses to further motivate employees. These actions aimed to enhance employee motivation, ultimately driving improved job performance.

Table 12

Future Strategic Action Plan of Job Performance Based on Juxtaposed Mixed Method Data Results

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
Job Performance	<p>“My performance has continually improved.” 3.90</p> <p>“I combine the available resources very well to provide quality services.” 3.90</p>	<p>“My performance has continually improved.” 4.13</p> <p>“I combine the available resources very well to provide quality services.” 4.23</p>	<p>Theme 1: Goal setting and planning help employees achieve their goals. Employees use the SMART goal setting method shared in ODI.</p> <p>Theme 2: Through effective communication and collaboration, employees of Nature’s Own strive to achieve common goals.</p> <p>Theme 3: Through teamwork and support for each other, employees of Nature’s Own work on achieving common goals.</p> <p>Theme 4: Setting milestones to measure progress and track performance.</p> <p>Theme 5: Performance Metrics and evaluation are used by employees of Nature’s Own to</p>	<p>Set Clear Goals and Expectations</p> <p>Clearly define and communicate performance goals and key performance metrics to ensure employees understand what is required to achieve success.</p> <p>Invest in Skill Development</p> <p>Provide opportunities for employees to enhance their skills and competencies to improve job performance.</p> <p>Encourage continuous learning and support career development plans.</p>

Variable	Quantitative		Qualitative	Proposed Strategic Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study
	Pre- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Post- ODI Lowest Mean Item	Theme	
			track progress and performance.	

Table 12 presents future strategic action plan for job performance based on the juxtaposed mixed method data results. The proposed strategic action plan for Job Performance focuses on setting clear goals, investing in skill development, and encouraging continuous learning to enhance employee performance. The plan includes clearly defining performance goals and key metrics, ensuring employees understand what is required to achieve success, with an emphasis on using the SMART goal-setting method. It also suggests providing opportunities for skill development through training and professional growth programs to improve competencies. Additionally, continuous learning and career development support will be encouraged to help employees stay engaged and consistently improve their performance. These actions aim to enhance job performance by providing clarity, fostering growth, and promoting ongoing development.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to enhance employee job performance by improving work ethics, emotional intelligence, and motivation. Using OD theories and ODI design with a mixed-methods approach, the researcher conducted action research with an aim to enhance employee job performance by improving work ethics, emotional intelligence, and motivation.

Quantitative data results showed significant improvements in all areas, with mean scores of 4.29 for work ethics, 4.10 for emotional intelligence, 4.19 for motivation, and 4.30 for job performance. Motivation showed the greatest improvement (8.83%), followed by work ethics (7.25%), while emotional intelligence and job performance showed smaller gains (6.49% and 6.70%, respectively). These results were supported by both quantitative data and qualitative feedback from semi-structured interviews, highlighting the positive effect of the ODIs on employee performance.

The qualitative data results showed that the Organizational Development Interventions (ODIs) have positively influenced work ethics, emotional intelligence, motivation, and job performance at Nature's Own. Employees have shown improved handling of ethical dilemmas, enhanced communication, and stronger adherence to company policies. Emotional intelligence has notably improved, with increased self-awareness, empathy, and stress management. Motivation has been significantly driven by recognition and professional development

opportunities. These findings suggest that ongoing training, consistent recognition, and further growth opportunities could further elevate employee performance and engagement.

Recommendations

Based on the detailed analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from this study, recommendations for further organizational development of Nature's Own Company Limited derived from Table 9 and are summarized below:

1. *Work Ethics*: To improve work ethics, the organization should focus on advanced training in ethical decision-making and conflict resolution, as well as strengthen reporting mechanisms for misconduct. Reinforcing adherence to company policies through targeted workshops will further promote compliance. Additionally, fostering a culture of integrity and transparency through leadership examples and recognition programs will encourage accountability and maintain high ethical standards across the organization.

2. *Emotional Intelligence*: Enhancing emotional intelligence can be achieved by creating a supportive work environment with open communication and regular feedback. Introducing mentorship programs will guide employees in developing their emotional intelligence, while providing stress management resources will help employees regulate emotions more effectively. These initiatives will improve self-awareness, interpersonal skills, and emotional resilience, contributing to stronger collaboration and healthier workplace relationships.

3. *Motivation*: Motivation can be increased by investing in professional development and goal-setting training to empower employees in achieving personal and professional objectives. Establishing formal recognition systems, including regular performance reviews and rewards for exceptional contributions, will reinforce motivation and job satisfaction. Reviewing and adjusting compensation packages to ensure they remain competitive and performance-based will further incentivize engagement and sustained high performance.

4. *Job Performance*: To boost job performance, it is essential to clearly define performance goals using the SMART framework, aligning employees with organizational objectives. Investing in continuous skill development and offering career advancement opportunities will help employees improve their competencies and performance. Promoting continuous learning and growth will foster a culture of excellence, driving overall organizational success and enhancing employee contributions over time.

Contribution to OD Theories and Applicability for SMEs

This study contributes to organizational development (OD) theories by demonstrating the integrated impact of motivation, work ethics, and emotional intelligence (EI) on employee performance. It validates the practical application of frameworks such as SOAR Analysis and the Weisbord Six-Box Model in diagnosing organizational challenges and designing effective interventions. The research emphasizes the significance of culturally tailored OD strategies, particularly in Myanmar's collectivist context, where interventions like mindfulness training and ethical decision-making workshops address cultural barriers to communication and policy

adherence. These findings affirm the adaptability of OD theories to diverse organizational and cultural settings.

For other SMEs, especially those operating in resource-constrained or developing markets, this study offers a practical and scalable model for workforce development. Cost-effective interventions, such as goal-setting workshops, team-building exercises, and EI training, provide actionable strategies to enhance employee performance and engagement. Strengthening ethical behavior, fostering emotional intelligence, and aligning motivational initiatives with organizational objectives are particularly relevant for SMEs reliant on close-knit teams. This research highlights how targeted OD interventions can help SMEs achieve sustainable growth, improve operational effectiveness, and gain a competitive edge in their respective industries.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Limitations of the study include the small size of the research sample, limited job positions/job scopes of the employees, and limited demographic of the employees. Most employees are production workers from a small office so this could lead to differences in the organizational structure, business process, and management from other manufacturing companies as well as companies from the other industries. Therefore, the results of this study might not be applicable to other industries. The study's reliance on webinars and lectures for ODI may have decreased participant engagement. Future sessions should incorporate more interactive team-building activities. Furthermore, inviting trainers with diverse expertise from various industries could significantly enrich the training experience, offering a broader range of perspectives and enhancing overall professionalism.

Future studies could benefit from a more extensive and diverse sample to gain deeper insights into the impacts of Organizational Development Interventions (ODIs). Expanding the participant pool beyond the Yangon office to include employees from the Pyin Oo Lwin factory would ensure a more representative analysis of the entire workforce at Nature's Own. This broader approach would not only enhance the validity of the findings but also provide a richer understanding of how ODIs affect different employee groups, considering variations in roles and experiences.

Additionally, future research could focus on enhancing emotional intelligence within ODIs. Since emotional intelligence showed the least improvement post-intervention, it is essential to explore strategies that facilitate effective relationship management, stress management, and open communication. Addressing the lack of feedback mechanisms and promoting work-life balance could be critical areas for future studies. Identifying the specific factors that hinder emotional intelligence across various employee demographics and job functions will help tailor interventions more effectively. This targeted approach could lead to better strategies for improving emotional intelligence, ultimately enhancing employee job performance and overall satisfaction.

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