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## **Determining Employee Engagement Factors to Enhance Employee Performance: A Case Study of Fine Dining Restaurant in Yangon**

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### **Abstract**

Employee performance has a great impact on the success of the restaurant business. To maintain the service quality in a competitive market in fine dining industry, keeping the employees engaged and driven should be on top of the priorities for a restaurant owner because motivated employees that work in a team-driven environment are more likely to perform better. This action research intended to discover the priority needs for the improvement of employee performance in terms of work environment, teamwork, employee development, leadership, and employee engagement by using the case study of fine dining restaurant in Yangon. A mixed method research using Structured questionnaire (n=49) and Qualitative interview (n=7) was conducted in this study. The target population comprises all employees, middle-level management, and top-level management. The data analysis treatment includes Cronbach's Alpha testing, descriptive statistics and PNI modified for the survey questionnaire and content analysis for focused group interview. The results from PNI modified indicate that Leadership, Work Environment, Employee Development and Employee Performance are the top four factors that need to be prioritized. Based on the content analysis by the coders, employee development is a key factor in enhancing employee performance. Finally, the strategies designed to improve the employee performance of fine dining restaurant A will be presented based on the findings of all results.

Keywords: leadership, employee development, work environment, employee performance

### **Introduction**

Even though COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected the country's economy, fine dining restaurants in Myanmar still manage to operate full-time service. People tend to choose healthy diet lifestyle in post pandemic period and enhanced focus on population on maintaining a healthy diet is contributing to more customers at fine dining places, which is expected to support the growth of the fine dining restaurants in the coming years.

There is an increase demand in fine dining restaurants in Myanmar after treating Covid-19 like a seasonal flu in most areas of the country. For the restaurant to be able to increase sales and profits, employee performance plays a vital role in supporting its organization. In this research, the researcher focuses on the factors affecting employee engagement in order to achieve the expected employee performance. A need assessment is used to prioritize the employee engagement factors to improve employee performance at fine dining restaurant A.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To determine the current situation of employee performance as a result of the different factors
2. To determine the expected situation of employee performance as a result of different factors
3. To prioritize the needs factors to enhance employee performance based on PNI modified
4. To gain insights on how employees wish to improve their performance based on the interview
5. To design the strategies to improve employee performance based on the findings

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the current situation of employee performance as a result of the different factors?
2. What is the expected situation of employee performance as a result of the different factors?
3. What are the priority factors to enhance employee performance based on PNI modified?
4. What are the employees' wishes to improve their performance based on the interview?
5. What strategies can be designed based on the findings?

## **Literature Review**

### **Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation**

Clayton Alderfer redefined Maslow's need hierarchy theory of motivation in his own terms. He developed Maslow's hierarchy of needs into three factors model of motivation known as ERG theory of motivation. The letters E, R and G in this model each stand for a different human need: existence, relatedness, and growth (Sachs H, 2020).

Existence needs include need for basic material necessities. In brief, it includes an individual's physiological and physical safety needs. Relatedness needs include the aspiration individuals have for maintaining significant interpersonal relationships (for example, to be with family, peers, or superiors), getting public fame and recognition. Maslow's social needs and external component of esteem needs fall under this class of need. Growth needs include need for self-development, personal growth, and advancement. Maslow's self-actualization needs and intrinsic component of esteem needs fall under this category of need (Management Study Guide, n.d.).

Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation explains that individuals can be motivated by multiple levels of need at the same time, and that the level which is most important to them can change over time. In other words, an individual's priorities and motivations may change from the existence to relatedness or to growth levels of need over time. They can move from upwards to downwards at any time (World of work project, n.d.).

### **Employee Performance**

Employee performance refers to the outcome of the employees both financially and non-financially, which has a direct link with the organizational performance and its success. The performance of an individual or an organization depends heavily on all organizational policies, practices, and design features of an organization (Cardy, 2004). According to professionals and academics explanations, the main factor to improve employee performance is to focus on promoting employee engagement. Demerouti and Cropanzano (2010) stated that due to the results of various factors, engagement can enhance performance. These findings are supported by a growing number of studies which proved a positive relationship between engagement and individual performance (Halbesleben JRB, 2010; Mone & London, 2014).

Several studies suggest that focusing on promoting employee engagement is an important way to enhance employee performance. The existence of high levels of employee engagement in the organization intensifies job performance, task performance, and organizational citizenship behavior, productivity, discretionary effort, affective commitment, continuance commitment, levels of psychological climate, and customer service (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Christian et al., 2011; Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008).

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is an important factor to help every organization to aspire to gain competitive advantage over the others. Employee engagement is also considered to be the most powerful factor to measure a company's vigor (Baumruk, 2004). Katz and Kahn stated that employee engagement can have an impact on organizational effectiveness (Anitha, 2014). It was, however, mentioned in general as one of several needs to be developed to provide an innovative and co-operative work environment leading to performance and effectiveness.

The prediction of the analysts shows that employee engagement will become a key measure of organizational success. Companies with higher levels of employee engagement perform better than their rivals in terms of performance and profitability (Cook, 2008). Kahn introduced the concept of employee engagement, giving his now famous definition, that is, "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles" and he also stated that in engagement, "people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". Kahn explained that three psychological engagement conditions are necessary for an employee to be properly engaged: meaningfulness (work elements), safety (social elements, including management style, process, and organizational norms) and availability (individual distractions) (Anitha, 2014).

## **Work Environment**

Work environment is one of the key factors to determine the level of employee engagement. Chandrasekar (2011) argued that it is necessary for an organization to create a work environment that enhances the employees' ability to be more productive in order to increase profits for the organization.

Work environment includes physical, digital (virtual) and social environments of the employees. The physical environment comprises the facilities and spaces of the companies, such as workspaces, meeting rooms, lounges, and the related furniture. The digital environment includes information and communication technology (ICT) and is also a collaborative virtual workspace between people. The social environment refers to space which is not only a physical or a digital space where social interaction takes place; but also embrace everything related to human interaction, organizational leadership, and management practices as well as the overall atmosphere, work culture, work habits and interpersonal relationships (Palvalin, 2019; Vartiainen et al., 2007).

## **Teamwork**

Nowadays, it has been found out that teamwork is a crucial factor for the success of an organization as the team creates greater involvement of the employees which in turn results in better productivity at the workplace (Stough et al., 2000). Effective teamwork results in happier and more productive employees, a better experience for customers, and leads to increased profits for the company (Dehar R, 2022).

Goodwin and Johnson (2000) discovered that there are key elements of teamwork in order to have a successful team which are: 1) goal definitions; 2) task definition; 3) clear allocation/ acceptance of roles and responsibilities; 4) effective communication skills; 5) successful relationship skills; 6) sustained supportive behavior; 7) flexibility of thought; 8) adaptability of response; 9) overt prioritization of the collective interest over the individual; 10) joint ownership of the central task. The eight factors to build collaborative teams by Gratton and Erickson (2007) includes: 1) signature relationship practices that build bonds among the staff; 2) roles models of collaboration among executives; 3) supporting employees by mentoring and coaching them daily; 4) training in relationship skills - communication and conflict resolution; 5) supporting a strong sense of community; 6) assigning team leaders that are both task and relationship oriented (ambidextrous leadership); 7) building on heritage relationships by populating teams with members who known and trust one another; and 8) understanding role clarity and task ambiguity. According to the above studies, the factors are almost the same with each other to achieve a successful team.

## **Employee Development**

Employee development can be achieved through continuous learning practices in an organization to increase employee commitment and productivity. Employee development has an upwardly beneficial impact, from employee to manager to organization (Hosmer, 2015). Employee development involves "the expansion of an individual's ability to function effectively in his or her present or future work and in the organization where he or she works" (Hezlett & McCauley, 2018).

Moreover, since development programs help employees to focus on a work dimension, it is another important factor in the process of engaging employees. Employee development programs improve service quality and thereby impact service performance and employee engagement (Nasidi et al., 2020).

### **Leadership**

Leadership has different meanings defined by various authors throughout the years. In short, leadership is the ability to influence others to reach organizational goals. Many research studies for example (Wallace & Trinkka, 2009) have proved that when there are inspired leaders in an organization, engagement occurs naturally. One of the responsibilities of leaders is to acknowledge the efforts of employees which play a significant role in the overall success of an organization. Employee interest and engagement can easily be achieved when employees' work is considered important and meaningful. Authentic and supportive leadership theory is proposed to impact engagement of employees to increase the involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm of employees at workplace (Schneider et al., 2009).

McKinsey (2022) defined leadership as individuals who possess a set of behaviors used to help people align their collective direction, to execute strategic plans, and to continually renew an organization. Good leaders apply different leadership styles according to the situation, they know how to adapt a different style to a new set of circumstances (Raza et al., 2018). Good leaders focus on motivating and developing people. For the greater benefit of an organization, it is important for everyone to have a positive leadership mindset.

### **Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative, coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Appreciative Inquiry is known as an asset-based or strengths-based approach to systems change as it generates positive ideas rather than identifies negative problems. AI proposes the concept that combined strengths do more than perform; they transform. The Appreciative Inquiry 4D Cycle is practiced most among practitioners which are Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

### **Needs Assessment**

A need assessment is the process of determining the gap of performance between the current state and the future state (Altschuld & Kumar, 2009). To conduct a need assessment, the need assessor requires to collect sufficient data from the clients to have a deep understanding of the current situation. Then the need assessor is to work with the clients to identify the desired state of the performance. The need assessment is conducted mostly for the following reasons: 1) to address a recurring problem that has been identified within an organization, 2) to find out strategies to improve the quality of the existing organizational practices, and 3) to identify opportunities for growth of the organization (Stefaniak, 2020).

**Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI modified)**

Modified Priority Needs Index or PNI modified is used to prioritize the needs by accessing the gap between the current situation of each variable with the expected situation (Wongwanich & Tangdhanakanond, 2012). The formula is as follow:

$$PNI\ modified = (I - D) / D$$

I represent the desired state

D represents the current state

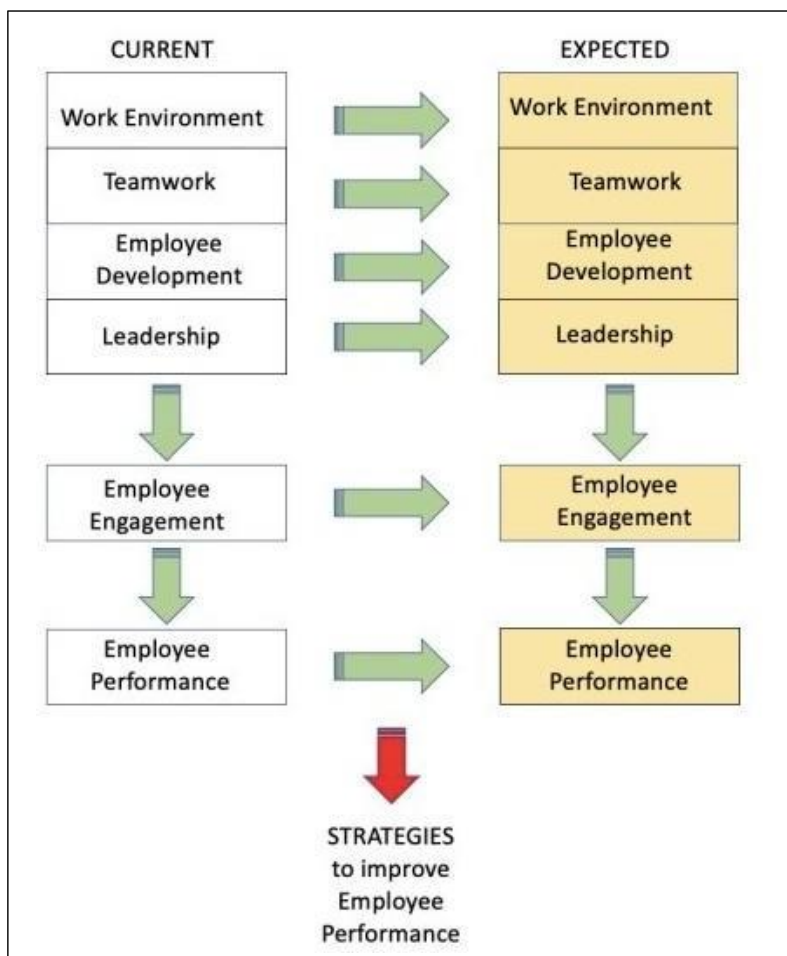
**Research Methodology**

**Conceptual Framework**

This study determined the priority needs of employee performance where work environment, teamwork, employee development and leadership as independent variables, employee engagement as the mediator variable and employee performance as dependent variable. The framework is as follows:

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework*



Note: Developed by the researcher (2023)

## **Research Design**

In this article, the researcher used mixed methods which are quantitative and qualitative data collection to accomplish the research purpose. The quantitative data was collected through an online survey from all levels of employees within the organization. The data from the survey questionnaires are used to determine the priority needs factors to improve employee performance. The qualitative data was gathered from top management and managers from all departments through focus group interview.

## **Research Instruments**

### ***Quantitative Research Instrument***

A need assessment questionnaire was distributed online to all levels of employees within the organization to collect the primary data. The survey questionnaire was used to assess the current and expected situation of all the variables under this research study. The data collected from this research instrument is used to prioritize the employee engagement factors to enhance employee performance.

The questionnaires were designed in English and translated in Myanmar, and they were divided into three parts. The first part includes demographic questions, the second part consists of questions based on the current and expected situations of all the variables under this research study and the last part is a suggestion box for recommendations to increase employee performance.

A 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used in the survey questionnaire.

### ***Qualitative Research Instrument***

The focus group interview questions were designed using Appreciative Inquiry 4D model. The questions are as follows.

1. What does Employee Engagement mean to you? What does Employee Performance mean to you?
2. Tell me about your one best experience when you felt most productive in your work? How did that positively affect you?
3. What factors do you think can influence employee engagement? What factors will improve employee performance?
4. What are the 3 wishes in the future to enhance employee performance?

The focus group discussion was conducted by 7 key managers and top management within the organization. Three coders were selected to take part in data analysis process by using inter-coding method in this research instrument.

## **Research Sampling**

The target population in this study includes all levels of employees from the restaurant which are 49 people. The online questionnaires were distributed to all the employees, 42 staff, 6 from middle management and 1 from top management. In addition, the researcher selected 6 from managerial levels and 1 from top management for focus group interview.



## Results and Discussion

The demographic data results from this research study shows that among 49 respondents, most of them are male which is 75.51% or 37 respondents and only 24.49% or 12 respondents are female. Most of the respondents are aged between 18 and 30 years with 46.94% or 23 respondents. Most of them are married, which is 53.06% or 26 respondents. The highest education level of the respondents is bachelor's degree which is 26.53% or 13 respondents. Most of the respondents who have work experience of 1 to 3 years and who have been working for 7 to 9 years have the same results of 28.57% or 14 respondents for each group. Most of the respondents earn monthly income between 150,001 and 600,000 MMK which is 71.43% or 35 respondents.

### Descriptive Analysis of Current and Expected Situations

The quantitative data analysis results of current and expected situations are presented in the tables below.

**Table 1**

*The Results of Descriptive Statistics for all variables from current and expected situations.*

Factors	n	Current Situation (D)		Expected Situation (I)	
		M	SD	M	SD
Work Environment	49	3.83	0.708	3.93	0.576
Teamwork	49	3.90	0.645	3.92	0.632
Employee Development	49	3.88	0.682	3.98	0.604
Leadership	49	3.73	0.715	3.84	0.682
Employee Engagement	49	4.13	0.613	4.11	0.523
Employee Performance	49	4.13	0.505	4.17	0.472

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of current and expected situations for all the variables from the survey data collection. According to the table, the current situation of Employee Engagement (S.D = 0.613) and Employee Performance (S.D = 0.505) both have the highest means of 4.13 respectively, whereas Leadership (S.D = 0.715) has the lowest means of 3.73. On the other hand, the expected situation of Employee Performance (S.D = 0.472) is the highest with a mean of 4.17, whereas Leadership (S.D = 0.682) has the lowest mean of 3.84.

### Priority Needs Index of all the variables to enhance employee performance.

PNI modified result is concluded below to show the results for research objective 3.

**Table 2**

*Summary of PNI modified Results.*

Factors	n	Current Situation (D)		Expected Situation (I)		PNI modified	Rank
		M	SD	M	SD		
Leadership	49	3.73	0.715	3.84	0.682	0.0295	1
Work Environment	49	3.83	0.708	3.93	0.576	0.0261	2
Employee Development	49	3.88	0.682	3.98	0.604	0.0258	3
Employee Performance	49	4.13	0.505	4.17	0.472	0.0097	4
Teamwork	49	3.90	0.645	3.92	0.632	0.0051	5
Employee Engagement	49	4.13	0.613	4.11	0.523	0.0048	6

Table 2 shows there is a gap between the current situation and the expected situation at fine dining restaurant A. According to the results shown in the above table, the top 4 factors will be prioritized, which are Leadership, Work Environment, Employee Development, and Employee Performance. These 4 factors will be used to enhance employee performance in the restaurant. The prioritized items under each factor will be further concluded in table 3.

**Table 3**

*Summary of PNI modified (Items within each factor) Results.*

Factors	n	Current Situation (D)		Expected Situation (I)		PNI modified	Rank
		M	SD	M	SD		
<b>Leadership</b>							
My manager gives recognition for my hard work.	49	3.67	0.774	3.84	0.746	0.0463	1
My manager is helpful and supportive.	49	3.65	0.779	3.80	0.645	0.0410	2
My manager encourages me to do a better job.	49	3.80	0.612	3.90	0.684	0.0263	3
<b>Work Environment</b>							
I feel motivated because of a safe workplace.	49	3.86	0.736	4.04	0.644	0.0466	1
I feel appreciated for my contributions at work.	49	3.73	0.638	3.90	0.653	0.0456	2
I experience that my workplace ambience is pleasant.	49	3.88	0.832	3.98	0.520	0.0257	3

Factors	n	Current Situation (D)		Expected Situation (I)		PNI modified	Rank
		M	SD	M	SD		
<b>Employee Development</b>							
My manager cares about my career growth.	49	3.53	0.844	3.80	0.763	0.0765	1
I feel motivated after training and development programs.	49	3.82	0.697	4.00	0.540	0.0471	2
Training and development programs improve my job performance.	49	3.98	0.559	4.02	0.478	0.0101	3
<b>Employee Performance</b>							
I elevate my skills to make sure my job-related knowledge is up to date.	49	4.06	0.475	4.16	0.426	0.0246	1
I focus on the work results that I need to achieve.	49	4.18	0.486	4.24	0.480	0.0144	2
My performance has an impact at work.	49	4.14	0.577	4.16	0.514	0.0048	3

The top 3 items under Leadership show that employees at the restaurant want their leaders to acknowledge and praise them for their hard work. They also expect their leaders to be inspired, approachable and empathetic to them and they want their leaders to give them encouragement to perform well at work. For the Work Environment, the company needs to develop a safe environment which impacts on the employees' motivation. The employees want their co-workers and superiors to show appreciation for one another. They also expect the company to provide a pleasant workplace environment where there is trust and cooperation. Another factor to prioritize is Employee Development. The employees wish their managers to give resources and opportunities for their career growth. They want the company to provide effective training and development programs so that they will have an improvement in their performance. The last factor to prioritize is Employee Performance. The employees want the company to give them opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge. They also have a desire that the company support them to focus on the results of their performance and they want their performance to influence the company overall performance.

## Qualitative Data Results of Current and Expected Situations

**Table 4**

*The results of Qualitative Data of Current and Expected Situations*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Qualitative Findings of Current Situation (Based on focus group interview)</b>	<b>Qualitative Findings of Expected Situation (Based on focus group interview)</b>
<b>Work Environment</b>	-Treating employees like family	-Emotional support -Recognition
<b>Teamwork</b>	- Cooperation -Teamwork	-Good teamwork -Team building training for better teamwork
<b>Employee Development</b>	-Better performance Improvement in communication -Learn new things	-Career goals -Personal growth
<b>Leadership</b>	-Good hierarchical relationships -Effective communication	-Leaders/followers relationship
<b>Employee Engagement</b>	-Dedication -Commitment -Attachment	-Commitments  -Good communication
<b>Employee Performance</b>	-Job duties -Work done -Evaluation of work and responsibilities of the employees	-Perform the job duties related to the job descriptions

The researcher selected seven people, six of whom are department heads and 1 is from the top management to participate in the focus group interview. Based on the interview result, all of them stated that training and development program is required for employee performance improvement. They also agreed that performance appraisal is a must for their employees to improve their competencies. Promotion, recognition, rewards, and punishment system can also influence the employee performance according to the results of the interview.

### **The strategies designed to improve employee performance based on the findings.**

Table 5 presents the recommended strategies to improve employee performance of fine dining restaurant A. The areas to develop and strategies were designed based on qualitative results, PNI modified results and previous studies.

**Table 5**

*Strategies designed as recommendations based on the results*

<b>Prioritized Factors</b>	<b>Areas to Develop</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	Need recognition from their superiors as well as their help and support, and encouragement to perform better.	<b>Develop leadership competencies for managers/supervisors</b> 1. To have the ability to motivate and inspire their subordinates. 2. To recognize the accomplishments of the employees 3. To practice effective leadership skills 4. To consider rewards and mentorship for employee performance upgrade	-Employees will have trust and feel supported by their leaders
<b>Work Environment</b>	A safe and pleasant workplace ambience for employees to be motivated.  Appreciation for their contributions at work	<b>Create a safe and positive work environment</b> 1. Provide emotional support to employees to get motivation. 2. Give compliments for their accomplishments	-Employees will be motivated to perform better
<b>Employee Development</b>	Support from their supervisors for their career growth  Effective training and development programs to Improve the employee performance	<b>Supportive managers/supervisors</b> 1. Give resources and opportunities for the professional development of the employees  <b>Provide training and development opportunities</b> 1. On the job training to learn applicable skills for their job roles 2. Role play training to enhance their decision-making skills. 3. 360-degree feedback to improve individual performance	-Employees will benefit by having relevant skills and knowledge to better perform their jobs.  Cont/d..

Prioritized Factors	Areas to Develop	Strategies	Expected Outcomes
<b>Employee Performance</b>	<p>Able to elevate their skills to keep their job-related knowledge up to date.</p> <p>Focus on their job accomplishments</p>	<p>Give priority to learning and development</p> <p>1. Continuous learning and development activities such as coaching and mentoring</p> <p>A sense of purpose</p> <p>1. Delegate tasks and responsibilities</p> <p>2. Give positive and constructive feedback</p>	<p>-Employees will be confident by gaining skills and having experiences and they will feel like they are a part of the company which will in turn increase their performance.</p>

Table 5 presents the recommendations of strategies for each of the prioritized factors and the expected outcomes. For the recommendations to be relevant, both quantitative and qualitative results were considered, as well as previous studies by other researchers.

**Leadership**

- Develop leadership competencies for managers/supervisors: The managers at the restaurant require the ability to motivate and inspire as well as to recognize the accomplishments of the employees. The researcher proposes the managers practice effective leadership skills to have better productivity and performance at work. By practicing proper leadership styles, the organization will have trust from the employees and improve their performance (Win, 2016). Therefore, at the restaurant, the managers are recommended to consider rewards and mentorship for employee performance upgrade.

**Work Environment**

- Create a safe and positive work environment: The restaurant needs to provide emotional support to the employees so that they will be motivated at work. Showing appreciation for their contributions is a kind of support the employees want from their co-workers and superiors. The workplace environment can affect employees’ emotions. If the employees feel comfortable at work, productivity will increase and so do the performance of the employee (Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020).

**Employee Development**

- Supportive managers/supervisors: The researcher proposes that the restaurant supports employees career growth. The restaurant needs a supportive leadership team to provide employees with the resources and opportunities for their professional development. That includes empowering the employees to increase their capacities and allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). Employee development means the overall growth of the employees when employees develop the organization, so the organization will be more productive, and the employee performance will also increase (Antonacopoulou, 2000).

- Providing training and development opportunities: Effective training is needed at the restaurant to increase employee performance. Based on the results, the restaurant is recommended to give the employees; 1) on the job trainings to learn applicable skills for their job roles, 2) role play training to improve their decision- making skills and 3) 360-degree feedback to improve individual performance. Training and development not only enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes of the employees but also improve employee performance (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

**Employee Performance**

- Give priority to learning and development: The researcher proposes that the company prioritize continuous learning and development activities for employees to enhance employee performance. The employees need coaching and mentoring which helps them to achieve knowledge, skills and competencies to perform job effectively and efficiently (Neupane, 2015). Therefore, the restaurant is recommended to provide development programs to employees for better performance.

- A sense of purpose: The employees at the restaurant need a delegation of authority from their superiors to perform tasks and take responsibility for the results. Regular feedback which are positive and constructive should also be given so that the employees will have confidence in themselves and have a sense of purpose at work. It has been proven that employees' sense of purpose can have an impact on the performance of the organization (Nazir et al., 2021). Therefore, the restaurant is recommended to motivate the employees by recognizing their efforts and to make them feel important so that the employees will make a significant improvement in their performance.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

For the organization's productivity, profitability, and ultimate success, it is very important for the organization to improve their employee performance, which has a great influence on overall productivity. The purpose of this research is to find out the priority needs factors to enhance employee performance of fine dining restaurant A. Based on the findings from PNI modified, it is found out that Leadership (PNI modified = 0.0295), Work Environment (PNI modified = 0.0261), Employee Development (PNI modified = 0.0258), and Employee Performance (PNI modified = 0.0097) are the top 4 factors that need to be prioritized.

In conclusion, the strategies for each of the prioritized need factors are designed for the better future of the employees and the restaurant. For the data collection, the researcher applied mixed method research instruments on all 49 employees. A total of 49 employees participated in the survey questionnaire and the researcher selected 7 employees from top and middle management to participate in the focus group interview.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This research is conducted to determine the prioritized needs factors in order to enhance the employee performance of a fine dining restaurant in Yangon. The researcher focused on four independent variables which are work environment, teamwork, employee development, and leadership to determine whether they have influence on employee performance, while employee engagement is used as a moderating variable. For further studies, it is suggested to explore other variables to enhance employee performance which have not been covered in this study.

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