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# Experiential Learning Intervention Through Outbound Activity Enhancement on Emotional Intelligence, Competitiveness, and Physical Fitness of Female Workers

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## Abstract

In the era of global competition, the development of professional competencies of female workers faces specific challenges that require innovative approaches. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of experiential learning interventions through outbound activities in improving emotional intelligence and competitiveness of female workers. This study is motivated by the need of Daya Group Honda to develop female workers into division leaders in branches spread across West Java through the DBMP (Daya Basic Management Program). This study uses an experiential learning approach applied in outbound activities as a learning method through direct experience followed by structured reflection. Outbound activities were chosen because they offer a comprehensive framework for developing cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects simultaneously in a structured outdoor environment. This study involved 16 female employees from Daya Cipta Motor Group Honda Bandung who participated in a two-week experiential learning program through outbound activities. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires on emotional intelligence and competitiveness and analyzed using the Wilcoxon test. The results revealed a significant improvement in emotional intelligence, while competitiveness showed no significant change. Theoretically, this study reinforces the development of Experiential Learning theory in the context of female human resource development. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for the Ministry of Manpower and company management in formulating effective, evidence-based training programs that enhance emotional intelligence and promote sustainable competitiveness among female workers. The formulation of the research problem includes two main aspects: (1) the effect of experiential learning interventions through outbound activities on emotional intelligence of female workers, (2) the effect on competitiveness of female workers.

## How to Cite

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## INTRODUCTION

In an era of global competition, female workers face structural, social, and psychological challenges that impact their professional development (Adams & Wong, 2020). Career barriers and limited access to leadership positions further emphasize the need for innovative strategies capable of developing the quality of human resources, particularly in the public sector and private companies (Berliana, 2021). In line with Bandura's (1977, 1986) view, learning and the development of individual capacity are not only determined by internal factors, but also by social interaction and observation processes from the surrounding environment.

Experiential learning is a philosophy of instruction that favors direct experience followed by reflection as the foundation of constructing knowledge (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2020). Implementing it in outbound programs provides a real-life and challenging learning environment concurrently promoting participants' cognitive, emotional, and physical development (Davis & Martinez, 2022). This conforms to Social Learning Theory, which stresses that observation, interaction, and modeling are especially significant in shaping individual behavior (Bandura, 2001).

Outbound activities are also observed to be effective in enhancing interpersonal communication, teamwork, leadership, and individual resilience (Martinez-Lopez et al., 2021; Rodriguez & Kumar, 2021). Existing evidence suggests that experiential learning–based outbound activities result in greater self-efficacy, problem-solving ability, and creativity in managing adversity (Rahmawati & Suryana, 2023; Takahashi & Yamamoto, 2024). Bandura (1977) also emphasized that self-efficacy is a product of social learning activities gained either through one's own success or through observing others as models.

Besides, emotional intelligence is a fundamental psychological theory that deals with the capacity to recognize, comprehend, regulate, and apply emotions in normal circumstances (Mayer et al., 2022). It has been shown to significantly foster personal as well as professional success, since it is associated with empathy, emotional regulation, and social competence (Zeidner et al., 2020). Bandura (1986) also added that emotional regulation and interpersonal skills are learned through observing and interacting with other people, hence complementing the development of emotional intelligence.

In addition, outbound activities have proven useful in developing emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social skills (Garcia et al., 2019). Through team activities, the participants learn to manage stress, cope with pressure, and practice empathy through group work (D. A. Kolb, 1984; Mayer et al., 2016).

Besides emotional intelligence, competitiveness is also a crucial competency in the era of globalization. Competitiveness is defined as an individual's ability to compete healthily by optimizing available resources (Rahman et al., 2023). In a professional context, competitiveness is determined by innovation, creativity, and adaptability (Duckworth, 2021; Zhou & Wu, 2022).

Healthy competition encourages continuous learning, productivity, and achievement motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Williams et al., 2019). However, competitiveness also requires good emotional regulation to prevent burnout or interpersonal conflict (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1989). This is in line with Social Learning Theory which explains that the ability to compete fairly is formed through the process of social learning and self-belief that develops from experience and modeling (Bandura, 1977).

The novelty of this research lies in the analysis of experiential learning interventions through outbound activities, which not only focus on improving social skills or motivation but also highlight their impact on two important variables: emotional intelligence and the competitiveness of female workers. Previous studies have primarily examined outbound activities on learning motivation or teamwork (A. Johnson & Smith, 2017; Thompson et al., 2016), making the focus on female workers a novel contribution to the literature. Thus, this research also extends the implementation of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 2001) in the context of human resource development, especially female workers, through experiential learning and outbound activities.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the foundation of experiential learning as a holistic approach to human resource development. Outbound activities not only create learning experiences but also play a role in enhancing emotional competence and competitiveness, which are highly sought after in the workplace (Chen et al., 2022; Novak & Peterson, 2024). Practically, the results of this study are useful for companies, training institutions, and relevant ministries in designing innovative, experiential learning-based learning programs. This intervention can serve as a reference for organizations in preparing more competent, resilient, and highly competitive female workers in an era of global competition (Hart & Dowell, 2023; Torrico et al., 2025).

Based on the reviewed literature, there remains a lack of empirical studies examining the effect of experiential learning interventions through outbound activities on both emotional intelligence and competitiveness among female workers, particularly in industrial environments. Therefore, this study seeks to address whether experiential learning interventions through outbound activities can significantly improve the emotional intelligence and competitiveness of female workers.

This study aims to determine the effect of experiential learning interventions implemented through outbound activities on the emotional intelligence and competitiveness of female workers in industrial settings.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on female industrial workers an underrepresented population in experiential learning studies and its dual emphasis on emotional intelligence and competitiveness as critical outcomes of workplace learning. This study also expands the application of Experiential Learning Theory and Social Learning Theory to the context of industrial workforce development, providing new empirical evidence on how outbound-based experiential learning can strengthen emotional competence and professional readiness among female workers.

## METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a One-Group Pretest-Posttest experimental design method (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The independent variable was the experiential learning program through outbound activities, while the dependent variables were the emotional and competitive intelligence of female workers. The study population consisted of 16 female workers at the Daya Cipta Motor Group Honda Bandung company who participated in the training program, and all were sampled using the total sampling technique because the population size was relatively small (Sugiyono, 2018). The research location was at the company and at Kebon Pines Cikole. The research instruments were an emotional intelligence questionnaire based on Goleman (2006) and a competitive questionnaire adapted from the Competitive Scale (Houston et al., 2012) and the Sport Orientation Questionnaire (Gill & Deeter, 1988). The instrument adaptation process took into account cultural adjustments (Beaton et al., 2000; Hambleton, 2005).

Instrument trials were conducted prior to the main study, with validity tests using Pearson Product Moment correlation (Arikunto, 2021) and reliability tests using Cronbach's Alpha. The results showed that the emotional intelligence questionnaire was reliable ($\alpha$= 0.965) and the competitive questionnaire is reliable ($\alpha$= 0.921), so both are suitable for use (Wiratna, 2014). The research procedure included administering a pretest to the entire sample, implementing a two-week experiential learning program through five meetings, consisting of 12 structured experiential learning sessions (90 minutes per session) and two 10-hour outbound activities covering self-development, challenges, and integration. After the intervention was completed, participants were given a posttest. Pretest and posttest data were analyzed using SPSS version 23 with validity, reliability, and difference tests to measure the effect of the treatment (Fadluloh et al., 2024; Jessie & Chew, 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results, the analysis shows that the variables have non-normal data distribution. The Emotional Intelligence Pretest (p-value = 0.000), Emotional Intelligence Difference (p-value = 0.000), Competitive Pretest (p-value = 0.001), Competitive Posttest (p-value = 0.014), and Competitive Difference (p-value = 0.000) variables have p-values smaller than 0.05, so the data for these variables are not normally distributed.

### Testing the Effect of Experiential Learning Programs through Outbound Activities on Emotional Intelligence

The results of the test of the effect of the Experiential Learning Program on Emotional Intelligence indicate that the program has a significant effect. This analysis is based on the Wilcoxon test results which show a p-value of 0.001. Because this p-value is much smaller than 0.05 (the commonly used significance level), we can reject the null hypothesis (which states there is no difference) and accept the alternative hypothesis (which states there is a difference). Descriptively, there is an increase in Emotional Intelligence scores from the Pretest to the Posttest. The average score (Mean) increased from 93.25 to 96.50, with an average difference of 3.25. This increase is supported by the median value which also increased from 97.50 to 99.50, indicating a consistent positive trend in the majority of participants. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Experiential Learning Program model through Outbound Activities is effective in improving Emotional Intelligence. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 can be accepted. The changes from the pretest and posttest are graphically shown in **Figure 1** below.

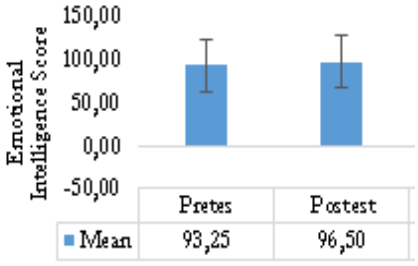


**Figure 1.** Differences in Emotional Intelligence Score Improvement

Overall, this visualization supports previous statistical findings that there was an increase in Emotional Intelligence scores after participating in the program. While the increase doesn't appear drastic on the graph, statistical analysis shows it is significant.

**Testing the Effect of Experiential Learning Programs through Outbound Activities on the Competitiveness of Female Workers**

The test results of the Experiential Learning Program's influence on female workers' competitiveness indicate no significant effect. This is evident from the p-value of 0.109, which is greater than 0.05 (a commonly used significance level). Therefore, we cannot reject the null hypothesis, meaning there is no significant difference between female workers' competitiveness scores before (pretest) and after (posttest) participating in the program. Although descriptively there is a slight increase in the average score (Mean) from 56.81 to 57.19, with a difference of 0.38, statistically, this increase is not strong enough to be considered a result of the program. Thus, the Experiential Learning Program through Outbound Activities has not been proven effective in increasing female workers' competitiveness. Therefore, hypothesis 2 cannot be accepted.

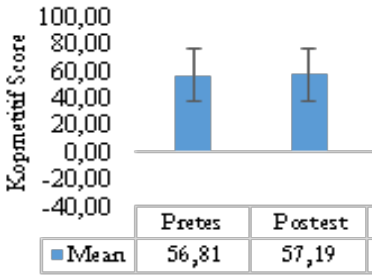


**Figure 2.** Difference in Competitive Score Improvement

Overall, this visualization supports previous statistical findings showing no significant difference in competitive scores as a result of the program intervention. The improvements were minimal and considered statistically insignificant.

The results of this study indicate that experiential learning interventions through outbound activities significantly increased the emotional intelligence of female workers, but did not significantly improve their competitiveness.

The findings of this research make a noteworthy contribution to the existing literature on the application of experiential learning in workplace settings, particularly within the industrial sector for female employees. Overall, the outcomes are in line with the theoretical framework of experiential learning, which underscores real-life experiences as a powerful means of cultivating social and emotional skills (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

The Wilcoxon test results provided a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05), which confirmed an effective effect of the outbound-based experiential learning program on the emotional intelligence development of female employees. This is aligned with current literature demonstrating that experiential learning increases the ability to recognize and control emotions, build empathy, and improve positive social interactions (Cherniss, 2015; Nelis et al., 2018). Outbound programs with elements of collaboration, communication, and problem-solving in groups have also been shown to develop emotional skills of participants, consistent with social learning theories that stress intensive interpersonal interaction as being central to the development of emotional intelligence (Schutte & Malouff, 2016).

Also, the observed improvement in the emotional intelligence of women employees is consistent with research that collective training based on groups has been shown to decrease work-related stress and improve psychological well-being (Hodzic et al., 2018). Outbound training, through subjecting the participants to physical and mental challenges, encourages the participants to self-manage emotions, overcome fears, and efficiently cope with stress, thereby inducing self-regulation as a core component of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006; Zeidner et al., 2020). These results also add further validity to the notion that experiential learning is a viable method of developing emotional competence in the workplace.

On the other hand, the analysis revealed that the intervention had no statistically significant effect on competitiveness ($p = 0.109 > 0.05$). Although there was a modest rise in the mean score, the increase was not sufficient to have a detectable effect. This finding can be explained by the relatively stable level of competitiveness

that is more strongly determined by personality and inner drive, and is therefore less susceptible to short-term interventions (Garcia et al., 2019; Houston et al., 2012).

Moreover, most outbound activities would emphasize cooperation over competition. This is corroborated by a number of previous studies which state that teamwork-based training is effective for building cooperation and leadership, but less effective for building individual competitiveness (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Santosa et al., 2021). herefore, the intervention's weak effect on competitiveness may be due to an incongruence between the design of the program and the particular competitive qualities it tried to enhance.

The novelty of this study is its concentration on women workers in the automotive sector, a group seldom examined in experiential learning studies. Although the majority of research has investigated students, educators, or workers in the service sector (Hodzic et al., 2018; Rahman et al., 2023). This study shows that outbound experiential learning effectively develops emotional intelligence but less so in competitiveness. These findings indicate that outbound training can potentially need to make some changes like incorporating more competitive activities so as to effectively enhance the competitive element in female employees.

## CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that experiential learning programs carried out by means of outbound activities effectively enhance female workers' emotional intelligence. Such programs cultivate self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills by having the participants acquire knowledge through hands-on activities, collaboration, and well-structured physical and psychological tests.

Conversely, the intervention did not show any meaningful boost boost in the competitiveness of women workers. Although there was a slight increase in descriptive scores, statistical test results did not support a measurable effect effect. This indicates that competitiveness is a relatively stable trait and requires a more specific, long-term intervention approach, or a combination of other training methods, to effectively improve it improve it.

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