OD meets AI

An industry-wide survey of how Artificial Intelligence is perceived and impacting the Organisational Development world

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There's a consensus that AI will increasingly be used as a tool in OD, with shared decision-making between OD practitioners and AI seen as likely. Particularly for complex system interventions.

Executive summary

Following an expression of interest in a series of talks at the ODNE conference in the Netherlands in June 2023, research was commissioned by the ODNE Board. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the level of awareness of Artificial intelligence (AI) applications and its impact within the field of Organisation Development (OD).

The aims of the research, presented in this report, were to explore:

1. The current perceived understanding of the technology landscape in OD
2. The level of openness to technology, and specifically Artificial Intelligence, by OD practitioners
3. Specific areas where different AI applications have been applied
4. Specific areas, that can be identified, where AI could be applied in the future
5. What might be the components of an ethical AI framework for OD practitioners

Between December 2023 and February 2024, 15,000 OD practitioners were invited to complete a survey from OD networks from all over the world: ODNE, ODN, IODA, OD Practitioners Association, and OD in Higher Education. As on the 29 February, 178 people from 23 countries had participated. This is only a bit more than 1%. We do not know if we suffer from a restriction of range, but the overall demographics were representative of the OD community. Over 44% had more than 20 years' experience and 17% had between 6 – 10 years' experience. 62% identified themselves as women. About 40% of the OD practitioners were working within organisations. This report is based on their responses.

Through our analysis of the results, three groups emerged:

- Tech-Savvy OD Humanists - who captured their appreciation for technology's role in OD while prioritizing human judgment and interactions.
- Pragmatic OD AI Integrators - who took a pragmatic approach to adopting AI, while focusing on tangible benefits and strategic integration.
- AI-Forward OD innovators - offered a forward-thinking approach and innovative use of AI in Organizational Development

Over 75% had the view that technology and human agency interact in complex ways to shape society

Who is this report for?

This report is intended for all people working directly or indirectly in the field of Organisational Development, Human Resources, Change Management and those working as Coaches.

Contents

Introduction

This research has been commissioned by the ODNE to gain clarity on the levels of understanding, what AI applications are relevant and the overall impact of AI within the field of Organisation Development.

Following a series of conversations at OD events, there were five topics that emerged:

1. **The current perceived understanding of the technology landscape in OD**
   It was clear that AI is being implemented in many client organisations. In the context of OD, the questions that had to be asked first were:
   - What was the philosophical view held by OD practitioners of AI?
   - Is the use of technology relevant to the work of the OD practitioner?
2. **Level of openness to technology, and specifically Artificial Intelligence, by OD practitioners**
   Following a series of presentations to the OD community, the practical application of AI generated a mixed review. The levels of awareness and openness to technology ranged from complete rejection to enthusiastic fascination. More clarity was needed on levels of openness.
3. **Specific areas where AI applications have been applied**
   There was value in establishing the current level of use of AI and how it could provide value to the client in their current OD projects. This led to a curiosity about how AI could help the wider OD network.
4. **Specific areas that can be identified where AI could be applied in the future**
   There was a keen interest in the extent AI could be integrated into future OD projects.
5. **What might be the components of an ethical AI framework for OD practitioners?**
   One of the original driving forces for this survey/questionnaire was to consult with the OD community on whether it was important to develop an ethical AI framework to support OD practice. The question was neither asked directly or implied by an invitation to align to an existing framework. It was important to see if this element emerged from the results.

To explore the questions within the five topics identified, the ODNE led by Prof. Dr, Jesse Segers (University of Exeter) with Tanya Spencer (BT) partnered up with other OD global networks and Nicola Strong (Strong Enterprises Limited). The aim was to conduct a survey of the OD community to discover the opinions, perceptions, experiences and attitudes of the role of Artificial Intelligence in OD.

What is Organisation Development?

"Organisation Development (OD) refers to the interdisciplinary field of scholars and practitioners who work collaboratively with organisations and communities to develop their system-wide capacity for effectiveness and vitality. It is grounded in the organisation and social sciences."

Smendzuik-O'Brien, J., & Gilpin-Jackson, Y. (2021).

Methodology

This survey formed part of a wider series of consultations designed by and for the OD community of 15,000 people between December 2023 and February 2024. The intention is to provide a useful snapshot for future events planned in 2024 and beyond.

ODNE Conference (Den Haag) in June 2023
ODNE event (online) December 2023
ODNE Conference (Glasgow) in May 2024

Using the online survey tool, Survey Monkey, 23 questions were developed on the following:

1. Biographical data of the participants
2. The perceived role of technology in society
3. The openness to accepting and using AI in their OD work
4. Relevance and helpfulness of different approaches to AI data collection
5. Opinions on using AI in data analysis
6. Usefulness of AI driven and support technologies in action planning
7. Opinions on AI enabled new and creative thinking processes
8. Evaluating the results of an AI-OD intervention in real time
9. Ranking of perceived ethical priorities in ethical AI design
10. Awareness of legal and regulatory frameworks that are being developed
11. Current use of AI technologies by the participants In their work
12. Anticipated use of AI technologies in the future

It was decided to include an option for a participant to add a free text comment with each question. This proved to be valuable in both the analysis and in compiling the content of this report.

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems. It involves the development of algorithms, software, and systems that enable computers to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. AI technologies aim to mimic cognitive functions such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, language understanding, and decision-making.

Ref: TechTarget.com

https://www.techtarget.com/searchenterpriseai/definition/AI-Artificial-Intelligence

Sample

The total number of respondents were 178 and this report is based on their responses.

- Gender: 62.4% identified themselves as women, 35.4% as men, and 1.1% as non-binary.
- Age: 7.3% were less than 35 years old, 14.6% were between 35-44 years old, 20.2% were between 45-54 years old, 32.6% were between 55 and 64 years, and 22.5% were above 65 years old. 2,8 years left it blank.

- A similar distribution can be seen when it comes to years of working experience in the OD-field. 12.4% had less than 6 years of experience. 16.9% had between 6 to 10 years of experience. 14% between 11-15 years, 10.1% between 16-20 years, and 44.9% had more than 20 years of experience in the field. 1,7% left it blank.

- 39.9% had an internal OD role within an organization, 33.1% had and external OD consultant role to an organization, 28.7% had OD consulting role and/or worked in training organisation, 7.3% was still different and included people in executive coaching, research, communication or taught at a university.

- 45.2% of the sample lives in the USA, followed by 19.6% in the UK, 6.1% in Canada, 4.5% in the Netherlands, 2.2% in Australia, with the remaining 22.4% coming from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, South-Africa, Spain and Taiwan.

Data was analysed with SPPS 29.0, open questions with ChatGPT 4. Where the percentages are more than 100%, participants had the option to select several options.

Emerging themes

OD practitioners and what drives technological change?

When it comes to the philosophical beliefs of OD practitioners on what drives technological change, only 2.2% of the participants are hard technological determinists. In the sense that they believe that technology is the primary driver of societal change and the human has a minimal influence. 23.5% of the participants were slightly less deterministic, aligning themselves with the belief that technology plays a significant role and human choices only influence societal outcomes.

In reference to technological change, 8.9% of the participants identified themselves as social constructivists. Meaning that human choices, and their values, are predominant in shaping technology, with limited technological determinism.

The large majority of the sample identified with technological interactionism (73.7%). In the sense that they believe that technology and human agency interact in complex ways to shape society. In a way this should not be a surprise given that interactional thinking is a big part of OD.

Will OD practitioners use AI in the (near) future?

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT 2) aims to explain a user's intentions to use an information system and their subsequent usage behaviour. The theory holds several key constructs: 1) performance expectancy, 2) effort expectancy, 3) social influence, 4) facilitating conditions, 5) hedonic motivation, 5) price value, 6) habit.[1]

Only 8.9% indicated that none of the factors, that are known to accept and use technology and in this case AI, applies to them. Logically, they have no intention of using it.

However, about half (49.7%) of the respondents clearly stated that they intent using AI systems in the next year.

The Unified Theory of Acceptance holds several key constructs:

1) performance expectancy
2) effort expectancy
3) social influence
4) facilitating conditions
5) hedonic motivation
5) price value
6) habit

[1]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unified_theory_of_acceptance_and_use_of_technology#:~:text=The%20unified%20theory%20of%20acceptance,system%20and%20subsequent%20usage%20behavior.

In terms of major drivers, performance expectancy was the most important in securing the adoption of AI in OD practice. 65.5% of participants could find AI systems useful in their OD job. 41.9 % confirmed that using AI systems is fun (Hedonic Motivation), while in terms of effort expectancy 40.2% stated that it would be easy for them to become skilful in using AI systems.

Demotivating drivers were related to the conditions for facilitating any AI adoption. Only 28.5% indicated that they had the resources necessary to use AI systems and 20.1% thought AI systems are good value for money (price value). Those participants who had habitually made the use of AI already, were 17.9% of the respondents. Whereas, those impacted through social nudging of their trusted influencers to adopt AI systems in their work were 15.1%.

The major concerns for OD-practitioners to (start) using AI (more)?

152 respondents answered this open question. In summary, while there is excitement about the potential of AI to enhance productivity and creativity, there's also a significant level of concern about privacy, security, ethical use, bias, and the overall impact of AI on employment and society.

These comments reflected a nuanced view of AI as a powerful, but complex, tool that requires careful consideration and management to ensure it benefits individuals, organizations, and society as a whole.

More specifically the top 12 concerns were (in order of importance):

1. **Privacy and Confidentiality Concerns:** The most frequently mentioned concerns revolved around how AI handles and protects personal and organizational data. This underscores the need for stringent privacy measures and confidentiality assurances.
2. **Bias and Ethical Considerations**: Many comments highlighted the inherent biases within AI algorithms and the ethical implications of AI's application, including its development and use. Issues of discrimination, fairness, and the ethical responsibility in AI usage were repeating themes.
3. **Accuracy and Reliability of AI Outputs:** Trust in the accuracy of information provided by AI was low. Examples cited included the potential for misinformation or "hallucinations" (AI generating false or misleading data), as well as the limited capability to verify and validate AI-generated content.
4. **AI's Impact on Jobs and Human Creativity**: There were a number of comments on the potential for AI to replace human roles, diminishing creativity, and the balance between leveraging AI and maintaining original human input and innovation.
5. **Time and Effort Required for Effective AI Integration:** There were challenges regarding the time it takes to input information into AI systems in order for them to function effectively. Plus, the assumptions around the perceived learning curve associated with adopting AI tools in work processes.
6. **Overreliance on AI and Loss of Human Touch:** Warnings against over-relying on AI for decision-making and problem-solving, leading to a potential loss of human trust, interaction, empathy, and nuanced understanding in professional settings.
7. **AI and Organizational Development Values:** There were questions on how AI aligns with core organizational development values, with some participants expressing concern over AI's potential to deviate from established norms and values.
8. **Security and Misuse of AI:** Issues related to the security of AI systems and the potential misuse of AI technology, including the manipulation of AI for unsupported outcomes or unethical purposes were highlighted.
9. **Governance and Regulation of AI:** There were a number of calls for proper governance, oversight, and regulation of AI technologies to ensure responsible development and deployment.
10. **Learning and Skill Development in AI:** The need for training and upskilling to effectively use AI tools and understand their capabilities and limitations.
11. **Integration and Application of AI in Workflows:** Questions will need to be asked about how AI fits into existing workflows, its relevance to current work processes, and the challenge of identifying suitable AI tools for specific needs.
12. **Cost and Resource Allocation for AI Adoption:** Concerns about the financial costs associated with implementing AI, including investments in technology and training, and the allocation of organizational resources towards understanding and integrating AI.

Specific areas where AI applications have been applied

Collecting data

We presented examples of AI tracking systems that can make the process of monitoring of staff more discreet. We asked participants which of these systems would they find helpful in their work in OD.

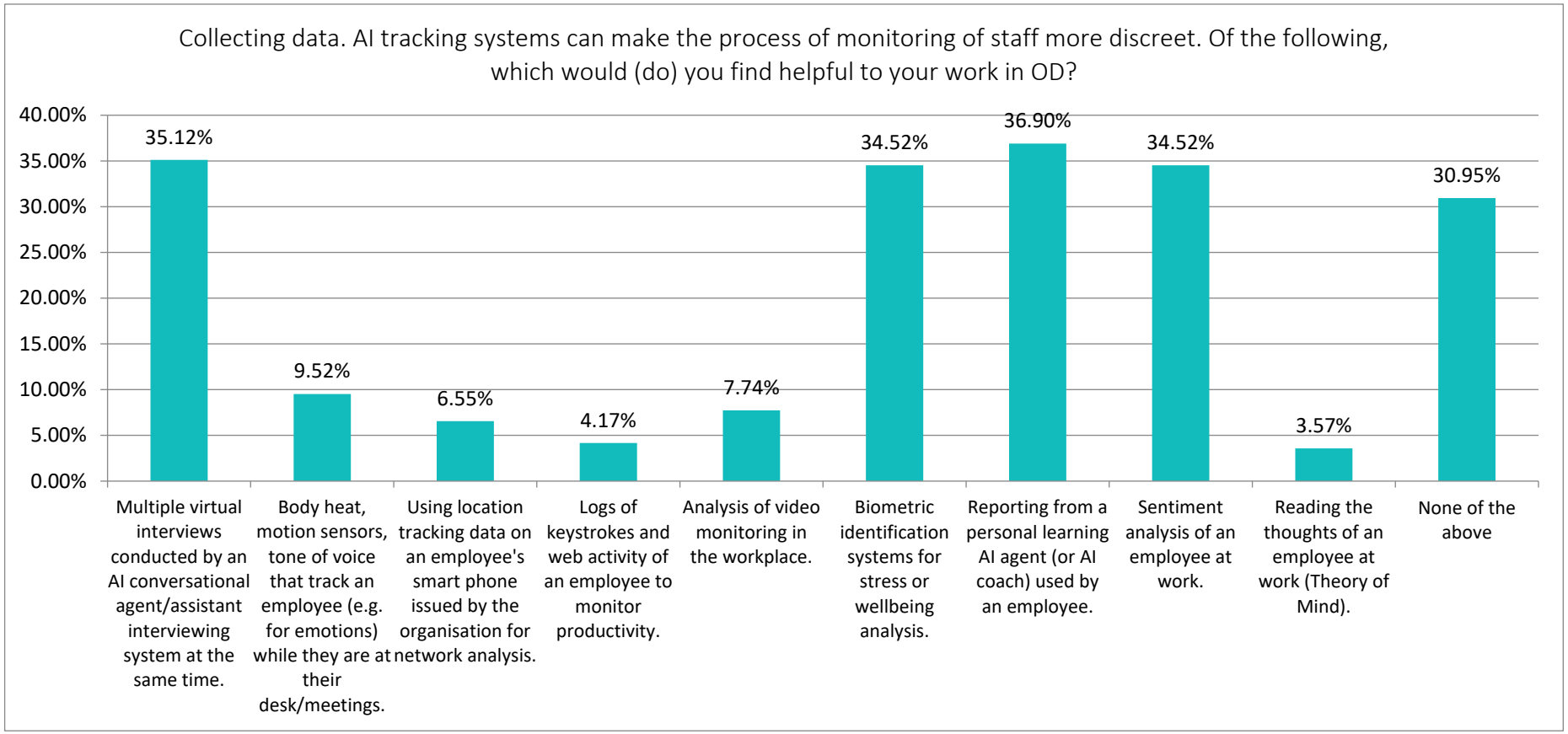


Figure 1: Chart indicating which AI technologies participants would find helpful in their work in OD (percentage).

On analysing the results, participating OD practitioners were more likely to find AI helpful when there was a clear link between AI and personal development or the well-being of employees. There were, however, some concerns. 53 people (about 30%) left a comment that evolved around seven topics:

1. Privacy and Intrusiveness: There was a strong emphasis on the potential for AI to infringe on personal privacy, with many respondents viewing the monitoring capabilities of AI as overly intrusive. In particular, the collection of sensitive data from body heat and motion sensors that could be seen as an invasion of personal space and autonomy.
2. Trust and Ethical Considerations: The deployment of AI in ways that monitor employee behaviour was perceived as a breach of trust between employers and employees. Respondents worried that such practices could erode the foundational trust necessary for a positive and a collaborative workplace culture. Furthermore, there are ethical questions about the extent to which employers should have oversight over their employees' actions and behaviours.
3. Consent and Human Dignity: A few comments highlighted the importance of obtaining explicit consent from employees before implementing any form of monitoring or data collection. The need to respect human dignity and rights is underscored, with a call for practices that do not undermine these principles.
4. Potential for Misuse and Unethical Application: There was a concern about the possibility of AI being used in ways that could be considered unethical, such as coercive monitoring or data collection practices that demean or dehumanize employees. The fear was that AI could be deployed to control rather than support employees, leading to a dystopian work environment.
5. Legislative Compliance and Organizational Values: Some responses indicated that the use of AI in such capacities may not align with local legislation or organizational values, particularly those emphasizing employee privacy, dignity, and human rights. The importance of aligning AI usage with ethical standards and legal requirements is a recurrent theme.
6. Impact on Organizational Development (OD) Principles: The perspective that invasive AI applications could conflict with core OD principles was mentioned. For example, autonomy, protagonism, and the cultivation of a supportive and empowering organizational atmosphere. The assumption that AI might be used more for surveillance and control rather than for fostering human-centric development and growth was highlighted.
7. Developmental Use of AI: While the comments largely focus on concerns, there's also a hint of interest in how AI can be used positively, such as for human flourishing, mapping patterns of relationships within organizations, and supporting decision-making. However, the emphasis remains on ensuring that AI applications are developmental, consent-based, and respect individual privacy and dignity.

> More than 36% said they would find a personal learning AI agent (or AI coach) used by an employee helpful in their OD work

In summary, the most important topics revolve around concerns of privacy, trust, ethical use, consent, alignment with organizational values, and the potential negative impact on employee well-being and organizational culture.

Specific areas that can be identified where AI could be applied

Data Analysis

AI can take very large amounts of unstructured data sets from all parts of the organisation and identify patterns. We asked when, accepting the appropriate permissions are in place, which statement was closest to their current opinion on using AI in data analysis.

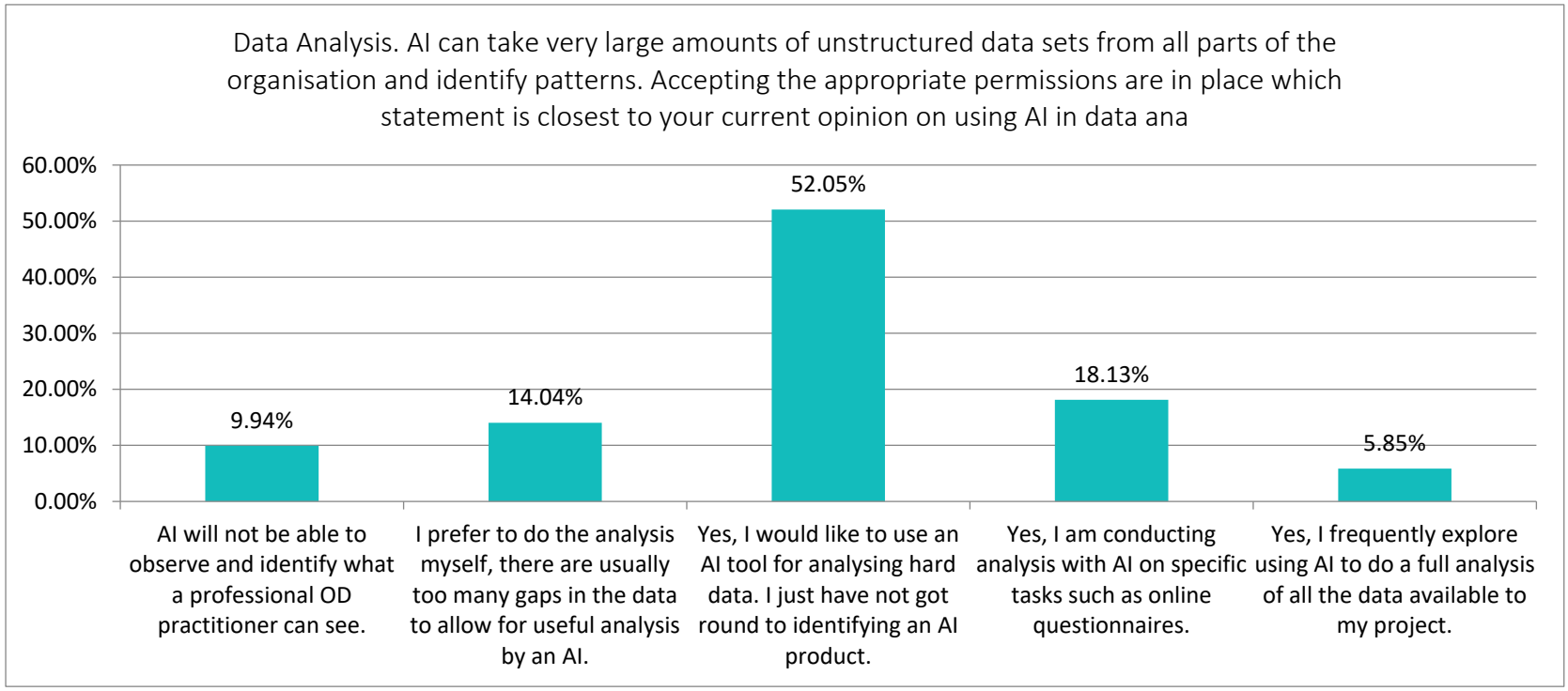


Figure 2. Chart showing, of the statements presented, which was closest to their current opinion on using AI in data analysis (percentage)

Action planning

AI is already used extensively in the recruitment industry to manage a client organisation, recruitment consultant and candidate through a recruitment journey. There are now AI products that guide employees, teams and leaders in their personal action plans that are also aligned to team-wide action plans. We asked the question “Do/would you find this AI facility useful in your OD-work on a scale from 0: meaning not useful up to 100 extremely useful? “

With the average being 51.61 and the Standard Deviation being 27.98 clearly the whole spectrum of views on this applies.

Creative thinking

When asked the question “There has been a growing interest in the many ways that AI can demonstrate creativity in different areas of work. This is includes writing stories, producing art or even writing entire research papers. How might AI enable new and creative thinking processes in an OD project?” 151 people (85%) answered this open question. The results painted the following picture and is ranked in terms of importance/frequency:

1. Idea Generation and Brainstorming: Many comments emphasize AI's role in stimulating creativity, generating new ideas, sparking discussions, and providing different perspectives. This theme stands out as a significant application of AI, suggesting that users value AI's ability to serve as a brainstorming partner.
2. Data Analysis and Pattern Recognition: Respondents highlight AI's capability to analyse large datasets, identify patterns, trends, and insights, and integrate complex concepts. This application is seen as crucial for developing innovative strategies and solutions in organizational development.
3. Creating Visual Representations and Custom Images: The use of AI for creating custom images for presentations and visual representations of data and concepts is frequently mentioned. This application supports the visualization of information in a more accessible and engaging manner.
4. Writing and Formatting Business Cases and Reports: AI's assistance in writing, formatting, and editing business cases, reports, and other textual content is a common theme. Respondents appreciate AI's ability to streamline these processes, reduce time spent on routine tasks, and improve the quality of written materials.
5. Developing Custom Case Studies and Learning Materials: In this survey, AI was valued for its potential to create custom case studies and develop learning materials, including scenarios, exercises, and training programs. This application is noted for enhancing educational content and making learning more relevant and personalized.

Many comments emphasize AI's role in stimulating creativity, generating new ideas, sparking discussions, and providing different perspectives

6. **Ethical Considerations and Creativity Concerns:** Some comments expressed concerns about the ethical use of AI and its impact on human creativity. Respondents are wary of over-relying on AI, fearing that it might lead to diminished original thinking and limiting human-centric creative processes.
7. **Facilitating Strategic Planning and Project Planning**: AI's role in creating outlines, timelines, templates, and recommendations for strategic and project planning is recognized. This theme underscored AI's utility in organizing and structuring complex planning processes.
8. **Presentation and Communication Enhancement**: The use of AI to improve presentations and communication, including designing PowerPoint slides and eLearning videos, was mentioned. This could reflect a desire to leverage AI for making communication more effective and engaging.
9. **Research and Information Gathering:** Several comments point to AI's usefulness in conducting research, assimilating information, and providing a basis for further exploration and decision-making. This application was appreciated for its ability to uncover insights and information that may not be easily accessible otherwise.
10. **Support for Organizational Development Interventions**: AI was seen as a tool that can support OD interventions by offering suggestions, analysing intervention impacts, and providing inputs based on established criteria. This theme indicated here was a potential for AI to contribute to the design and evaluation of OD strategies.

In summary, the most recurrent and important topics relate to AI's role in enhancing creativity, streamlining data analysis, supporting strategic planning, and improving communication and presentation materials. While there is enthusiasm for AI's potential, there is also a cautious recognition of the need to balance AI use with ethical considerations and the preservation of human creativity.

Leading change

The question on Leading change was: AI products can provide an OD consultant, coach or OD practitioner a means by which to “deliver individual and team behaviour-change at scale”. They can schedule team meetings, monitor "homework for each team member" and generate reports for the next meeting. Would you find this useful in your OD work on a scale from 0: meaning not useful up to 100 extremely useful?

The answer: With the average being 58.75, there was an slightly higher than average number of participants with an inclination to consider it useful. However, as the Standard Deviation is 26.825, clearly the whole spectrum of views applies on OD practitioners using AI to lead change at scale.

Currently, just over 8% of participants were using AI for evaluating and adopting change. Many others preferred to talk with employees, had not found an AI solution for their requirement, or were designing their own employee sentiment analysis.

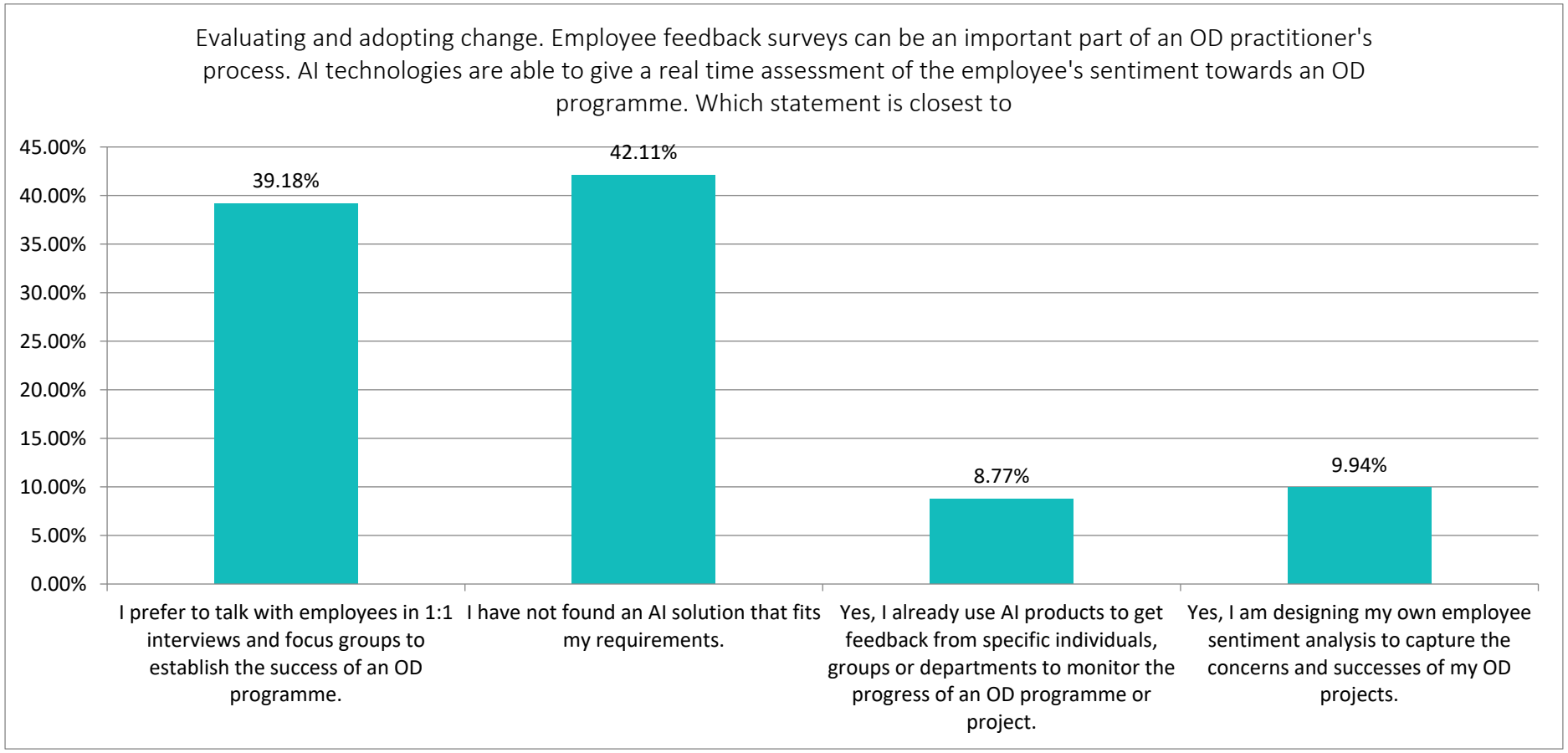


Figure 3. The question on evaluating and adopting change was done by selecting a statement to which the participant felt most aligned (percentage)

Current engagement with AI technology

Participants were asked to indicate their current level of engagement with AI technologies.

	I do not use any AI processes in my OD work	I use AI (such as Chat GPT) to help me with defining and designing my OD project	I use AI as a tool for the delivery of my OD project	I use AI for evaluating my findings in my OD projects
Individual interventions Coaching, personal leadership, spoken communication styles.	53.56%	29.6%	10.6%	8.9%
Interpersonal interventions Conflict management	60.9%	16.2%	5.0%	4.5%
Group interventions Team building, analysing team patterns.	46.9%	29.6%	10.1%	8.9%
Intergroup interventions Collaboration/conflict between departments, strategy implementation.	57.5%	22.3%	6.1%	7.8%
Organisational interventions Cultural change; mission/vision exercise, new organisational structures.	53.6%	26.3%	8.9%	8.9%
Total system interventions Changing inter-organisation networks and eco systems.	55.9%	22.9%	7.8%	7.8%

Figure 4. Table indicates the current level of engagement with AI technologies (percentage)

On average 54% of the participants said they are not using any AI processes in their OD work. However, more than 25% are using **AI (such as Chat GPT) to help them with defining and designing individual, group or organisational interventions.**

70 people (40%) provided input in terms of what tools they are currently using. Analysing the results reveals several recurrent topics related to the use of AI tools and applications in various professional contexts. Particularly in organizational development, HR, and related fields. The following technologies were ranked in terms of importance and frequency:

1) **ChatGPT Usage**: The most frequently mentioned AI tool was ChatGPT. Respondents indicated that they used it for a wide range of tasks such as brainstorming, writing and editing documents, summarizing text, generating ideas, and conducting basic research. Its versatility and generative capabilities made it a popular choice among professionals for enhancing productivity and creativity.
2) **Analyzing and Summarizing Data:** AI tools like Menti, Grammarly, Otter.ai, and Atlas.ti are utilized for analysing results from surveys, workshops, and interviews. These tools help in identifying themes, summarizing findings, and reporting insights to clients or within organizations.
3) **Presentation and Design Assistance:** Tools like Canva, Designs.AI, and Gamma are mentioned for their utility in creating visual content, refining the aesthetics of presentations, and designing images. These applications are used to support professionals in making their output more visually appealing and engaging.
4) **Sentiment Analysis and Employee Feedback:** Sentiment analysis tools and platforms that offer real-time analysis of employee feedback are used to gauge employee sentiments and analyse survey data. This can assist organizations in understanding employee experiences and identifying areas for improvement.
5) **Research and Content Creation:** ChatGPT and similar AI applications are leveraged for conducting research on trends, consolidating brainstorming data, and creating marketing materials. This underscores AI's role in facilitating information gathering and content development.
6) **Learning and Development Platforms:** AI-driven learning platforms like Percipio are utilized to offer blended learning opportunities to employees. Features like AI conversation simulators are explored to enhance learning experiences and simulate different scenarios for training purposes.

7) **Meeting and Note-taking Assistance:** AI tools such as Fathom and Tactiq are used for transcript analysis and meeting note-taking, helping professionals capture important discussions and insights efficiently.

8) **Productivity and Internal Tools:** Some respondents mention using AI as an internal productivity tool, including chatbots for dialog creation and supporting large transformation projects with information on norms, protocols, and FAQs.

9) **Ethical and Privacy Concerns**: Although not a tool, ethical considerations and concerns about data privacy emerged as an important theme. Professionals expressed caution regarding the use of AI, emphasizing the need for transparency, consent, and human oversight in AI applications.

10) **Exploratory and Early Use:** A few respondents are in the very early stages of using AI tools like ChatGPT and Bing Chat, indicating a curiosity and exploratory approach toward incorporating AI into their work processes.

Overall, the analysis reveals a strong inclination towards using AI, particularly ChatGPT, for a variety of tasks ranging from data analysis and presentation design to content creation and learning development. Despite the enthusiasm for AI's potential, there's also a discernible caution regarding ethical use and data privacy.

More than 25% is currently using AI (such as Chat GPT) to help them with defining and designing individual, group or organisational interventions.

In the next 5 years, 59% believe that OD practitioners will be leading and using AI as a tool.

To what extent will AI engage with the OD professional in the following areas in next 5 years?

The dominant view (59%) is that in the next 5 years OD practitioners will be leading and using AI as a tool. The more complex the client system, the more OD practitioners believe that they will be sharing decision-making with AI in a project. For example, 39% believe this when it comes to total system interventions vs 22.3% when it comes to individual level interventions. Only a very small group (4%) believes that OD practitioners will be replaced by AI.

	OD practitioners will complete their tasks independently of AI processes	OD practitioners will lead using AI as a tool	OD practitioners will share decision-making with AI in a project	OD practitioners will be replaced by AI	Are you aware of an AI application on this level already? Please include example in the comment box
Individual interventions	20.1%	56.4%	22.3%	7.3%	2.8%
Interpersonal interventions	19.0%	58.1%	21.2%	5.0%	0.6%
Group interventions	8.4%	63.1%	27.9%	3.9%	1.7%
Intergroup interventions	8.4%	63.7%	29.6%	2.2%	1.1%
Organisational interventions	7.8%	57.0%	37.4%	2.8%	0.6%
Total system interventions	**7.3%**	**55.9%**	**39.1%**	**4.5%**	**1.7%**

Figure 5. Table showing the degree OD practitioners intend to engage with AI technologies in the future

What might be the components of an ethical AI framework for OD practitioners?

Flexibility of values according to task at hand?

We started by asking whether values, synonymous with AI ethics, could change according to task at hand. The reponses indicated that 44.1% believed that values[2] change, 51.4% do not believe this and 3.9% did not complete this question.

Top 3 values for developing AI solutions.

There are well over 100 ethical AI frameworks being developed around the world already[3]. Based upon the outcome of this study, we asked people to select the top four values, from a list of eleven, that they think should be a priority to those developing AI solutions for the workplace.

In brackets is the average place, and the standard deviation. The lower the average score the more important the OD practitioners finds it.

A clear top three emerged.

The top 3 values for developing AI solutions are:

- Transparency
- Justice, fairness and equity
- Responsibility and accountability

[2] Leslie, D., (2019) "AI ethics is a set of values, principles, and techniques that employ widely accepted standards of right and wrong to guide moral conduct in the development and use of AI technologies"

[3] Jobin, A., Ienca, M. & Vayena, E. The global landscape of AI ethics guidelines. Nat Mach Intell 1, 389–399 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-019-0088-2)

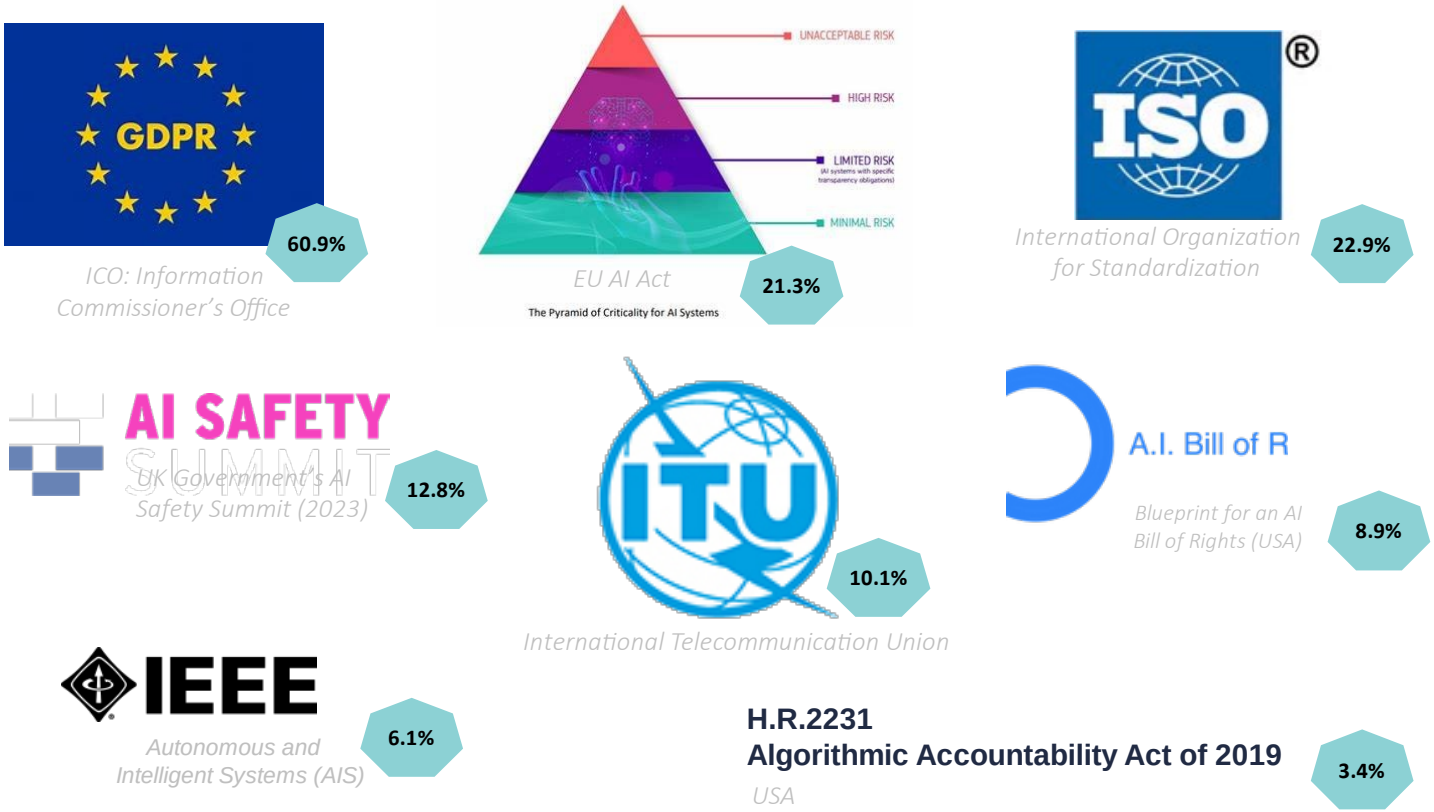
1	**Transparency**	Ensuring that algorithms are explainable, there no black boxes	(M = 3,15; SD= 2,18)
2	**Justice, fairness and equity**	“Developers need to remember it is the peoples' data that is being collected”	(M = 3,30; SD= 2,30)
3	**Responsibility and accountability**	human in the loop- human oversight	(M = 3,75; SD= 2,21)
4	Non-maleficence	regularly evaluate the AI tools, metrics, and data ensuring safety of the user	(M = 4,58; SD= 2,39)
	Privacy	maintain and review the relevant contractual agreements of the use of employee data	(M = 4,86; SD= 2,52)
6	Beneficence	the wellbeing of the employee (or user) is valued	(M = 6,12; SD= 2,44)
7	Freedom and autonomy	for the human employee in a decision-making process	(M = 6,24; SD= 2,75)
8	Trust	AI system that can gain, and maintain, trust as well as be trustworthy	(M = 6,70; SD= 3,08)
9	Dignity	AI ensures that humans are treated with respect	(M = 7,83; SD= 3,47)
10	Solidarity	That AI works WITH humans to find a solution	(M = 8,25; SD= 3,86)
11	Sustainability	the actions of the AI considers the long term view	(M = 8,27; SD= 2,89)

Figure 6. Table indicating values (in order of importance) that should be a priority when developing AI in the workplace (the results in brackets show the average place, and the standard deviation)

Legal considerations

Worldwide, there are regulations being developed to maintain AI safety. Organisations are being encouraged to sign up, voluntarily, to an "AI code of Conduct" or develop their own frameworks when implementing AI in their business. For an OD practitioner this creates additional complexities.

We asked participants to tick all those regulations of which they were aware.



Luckily, 60.9% indicated that they knew of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) privacy regulations (developed and managed by Information Commissioners Office (ICO)

All the others frameworks scored below 25%:

25.7% were not aware of any of the 8 frameworks offered.

Figure 7. Logos of eight organisations that are developing regulations that could impact an OD project implementing AI technologies.

AI Safety

There has been a growing international interest in regulating the development of AI and its applications. We asked what constraints on the use of AI in OD they would recommend?

Almost 60% (N=105) of people answered this open question. Analysing the provided comments, we can identify several common themes concerning the ethical and responsible use of AI, particularly in organizational development (OD) and related fields. These themes are ranked based on their importance and frequency:

1) **Ethical Considerations and Data Privacy:** The paramount concern across all the responses was the ethical application of AI, including ensuring data privacy, confidentiality, and ethical handling of data. This encompassed the protection of sensitive information and adherence to privacy regulations.
2) **Human Oversight and Decision-Making:** The necessity of keeping humans in the loop for decision-making processes was frequently mentioned. Respondents emphasized the importance of human oversight, validating AI decisions, and ensuring AI serves as an assistant rather than a decision-maker.
3) **Transparency and Consent:** There's a strong call for transparency in how AI systems are used, the data they collect, and how decisions are derived from AI analysis. This included the need for explicit consent from individuals affected by AI's applications, ensuring stakeholders are fully informed and agreeable to the use of AI.
4) **Regulation and Governance:** Many comments highlighted the need for rigorous governance, quality control, quality assurance, and the establishment of guidelines and policies to regulate AI's application. This included suggestions for bipartisan committees, third-party reviews, and international standards to oversee the use of AI.
5) **Diversity and Avoidance of Bias:** Diversity in human input as well as the avoidance of bias in AI algorithms and decisions are important themes. Respondents express concern about AI potentially reinforcing existing biases and the need for systems that consider and represent diverse perspectives and data.
6) **Security Measures and Confidentiality Maintenance:** Robust security measures to protect data during transfers and the importance of maintaining confidentiality in professional relationships indicated a deep concern for safeguarding data integrity and trust.
7) **Informed and Ethical Use Consistent with OD Values:** The application of AI within the framework of OD core values and ethics was highlighted, suggesting that AI should be used to serve the good of all stakeholders and respect human dignity.
8) **IP Protections and Compensation:** Issues around intellectual property protections and fair compensation for content creators were mentioned, pointing to concerns over the appropriation and use of creative and intellectual works by AI without proper acknowledgment or compensation.

9) **Avoiding Harm and Misuse:** There was a cautious approach towards preventing the misuse of AI for harmful purposes. The need to guard against the application of AI in ways that could violate human rights, dignity, or lead to unethical outcomes was emphasized.

10) **Client and Stakeholder Communication**: The necessity for clear communication with clients and stakeholders about AI's use, potential impacts, and the governance measures in place to ensure ethical practice was stressed. This suggested a broader need for transparency and accountability in AI applications.

The ten topics listed reflected a consensus on the need for careful, ethical, and human-centred approaches to integrating AI into practices, particularly in fields involving sensitive data, human interactions, and decision-making processes.

Summary of findings

Finally, in relation to the theme of AI, we checked the results to see if there were different types of OD practitioners. A cluster-analysis revealed three groups.

- Tech-Savvy OD Humanists – who wish to both capture their appreciation for technology's role in OD while prioritizing human judgment and interactions (18.6%)
- Pragmatic OD AI Integrators- their pragmatic approach to adopting AI focused on tangible benefits and strategic integration. (34.8%)
- AI-Forward OD innovators – offered their forward-thinking approach and innovative use of AI in their organizational development projects. (46.6%)

Each of the three groups did not differ in terms of age, gender, what the three most important values should be for AI solutions. They all agree that it should be transparency; justice, fairness and equity; and responsibility and accountability.

Tech-Savvy OD Humanist

Tech-Savvy OD Humanist was the smallest group. They are somewhat technologically deterministic as they align themselves with the belief that technology plays a significant role and human choices only influence societal outcomes. Also, they indicated that they didn't know what the role of AI could be when included in OD and managing change.

This suggests that they will wait before starting to use AI. As, currently, they are the least inclined to use AI technology for processes such as collecting data. In line with this preference, they believe that AI is not able to observe what a professional OD practitioner can see. They will choose to talk with employees in 1:1 interviews and focus-groups to establish the success of an OD programme. They may consider using AI for action planning.

Pragmatic OD AI Integrators

Pragmatic OD AI Integrators were found to be in OD consulting and/or training organisations. They indicated that they would find AI systems useful in their OD job, and would find using AI systems as fun. It is no surprise they intent to use AI systems in the next year and are currently using use AI (such as Chat GPT) to help them with defining and designing their OD project for individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup and organisational interventions.

Pragmatic users of AI were more common in OD consulting and/or training organisations.

People who have an internal OD role viewed themselves as taking the forward-thinking approach and innovative use of AI in OD.

Pragmatic OD AI Integrators would like to use an AI tool for analysing hard data, but just have not got round to identifying an AI product who can do the job. They are, for example, still designing their own employee sentiment analysis to capture the concerns and successes of their OD projects. They do not think it is useful for action planning. They even believe (more than the other two groups) that OD practitioners will share decision-making with AI in a project, and are quite excited about the role AI is taking in OD and manging change.

AI-Forward OD innovators

This is the largest group and typically will hold an internal OD role. They think AI systems are good value for money, so the use of AI systems has become a habit for them.

Not surprisingly, they will explore using AI to do a full analysis of all the data available for their OD projects, they are using AI products to get feedback from specific individuals, groups or departments to monitor the progress of an OD programme or project. They would find biometric identification systems for stress and well being, and reporting from a personal learning AI agent (or AI coach) used by an employee helpful in their OD-work. They would consider AI for action planning extremely useful. It is possible that the broad range of applications was related to the broad range of responsibilities they have as in internal OD professionals compared to the pragmatic OD AI Integrator group.

Clearly, the AI-forward OD Innovators are the most exited for the future and the role AI is taking in OD and manging change. They believe that OD practitioners will lead with AI as a tool in the next five years in group, intergroup, and total system interventions.

Conclusion

Finally, several conclusions can be drawn from this research by ChatGPT:

1. High Interest in AI's Potential: Broady, OD practitioners are interested in integrating AI into their work, with a significant portion already planning to use AI systems within the next year. Whether we suffer from a restriction of range is unknown.
2. Ethical Concerns Are Paramount: Privacy, bias, and ethical use dominate the concerns among OD professionals regarding AI integration, indicating a need for robust ethical guidelines.
3. Diverse Applications of AI Noted: AI is being applied and considered for a wide range of OD tasks, including data analysis, action planning, and enhancing creative thinking processes.
4. Three Distinct Attitudes Towards AI: The community is segmented into Tech-Savvy OD Humanists, Pragmatic OD AI Integrators, and AI-Forward OD Innovators, each with different perspectives and readiness for AI adoption.
5. Broad Demographic Engagement: The survey attracted participants from a wide range of countries, genders, and experience levels, indicating global interest and relevance of AI in OD.
6. AI Tools in Use: Current usage of AI tools like ChatGPT and sentiment analysis platforms highlights the practical adoption of AI technologies in the field.
7. Future Role of AI: There's a consensus that AI will increasingly be used as a tool in OD, with shared decision-making between OD practitioners and AI seen as likely, particularly for complex system interventions.
8. An Ethical AI Framework is Preferred: Transparency, justice, fairness, and responsibility are identified as top values for AI development, underscoring the demand for an ethical AI framework in OD practices.
9. Legal and Safety Awareness: Awareness of legal frameworks like GDPR is high, but there's recognition of the need for more guidance on AI safety and ethics specific to OD.
10. Innovative Yet Cautious Outlook: The OD community is both excited about AI's potential and cautious about its challenges, suggesting a balanced approach to future AI integration.

Privacy, bias, and ethical use dominate the concerns among OD professionals regarding AI integration, indicating a need for robust ethical guidelines.

Appendices

Appendix I: The questionnaire

The link to the survey was: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ODandAI

The list of questions include:

1. Which of the following options most closely aligns with your gender?

- ○ Woman
- ○ Man
- ○ Non-binary
- ○ A gender that is not listed here
- ○ I would prefer not to answer

Comment

2. What is your age?

3. How many years experience do you have working in the organisation development field?

4. Is your current OD role an internal , external or encompasses both?

- ☐ Internal OD role within an organisation
- ☐ External OD consultant role to an organisation(s)
- ☐ OD consulting and/or training organisation
- ☐ None of the above

Comment

5. Where do you live?

6. Please select the statement that aligns most closely with your view on technology now

- ☐ Technology is the primary driver of societal change, and human agency has minimal influence.
- ☐ While technology plays a significant role, human choices can also influence societal outcomes.
- ☐ Technology and human agency interact in complex ways to shape society.
- ☐ Human choices and values predominantly shape technology, with limited technological determinism.

Other

7. Please select the statements you (strongly) agree with today (tick all that apply)

- ☐ I would find AI systems useful in my OD job.
- ☐ It would be easy for me to become skilful at using AI systems.
- ☐ People who influence my behaviour think that I should use AI systems.
- ☐ I have the resources necessary to use AI systems.
- ☐ I think using AI systems is fun.
- ☐ I intend to use AI systems in the next year.
- ☐ AI systems are good value for money.
- ☐ The use of AI systems has become a habit for me.
- ☐ None of the above

Other (please specify)

8. What aspects of AI are a concern for you to (start) using it (more)?

9. **Collecting data.** AI tracking systems can make the process of monitoring of staff more discreet. Of the following, which would (do) you find helpful to your work in OD?

- [ ] Multiple virtual interviews conducted by an AI conversational agent/assistant interviewing system at the same time.
- [ ] Body heat, motion sensors, tone of voice that track an employee (e.g. for emotions) while they are at their desk/meetings.
- [ ] Using location tracking data on an employee's smart phone issued by the organisation for network analysis.
- [ ] Logs of keystrokes and web activity of an employee to monitor productivity.
- [ ] Analysis of video monitoring in the workplace.
- [ ] Biometric identification systems for stress or wellbeing analysis.
- [ ] Reporting from a personal learning AI agent (or AI coach) used by an employee.
- [ ] Sentiment analysis of an employee at work.
- [ ] Reading the thoughts of an employee at work (Theory of Mind).
- [ ] None of the above

Comment

10. **Data Analysis.** AI can take very large amounts of unstructured data sets from all parts of the organisation and identify patterns. Accepting the appropriate permissions are in place which statement is closest to your current opinion on using AI in data analysis?

- ◯ AI will not be able to observe and identify what a professional OD practitioner can see.
- ◯ I prefer to do the analysis myself, there are usually too many gaps in the data to allow for useful analysis by an AI.
- ◯ Yes, I would like to use an AI tool for analysing hard data. I just have not got round to identifying an AI product.
- ◯ Yes, I am conducting analysis with AI on specific tasks such as online questionnaires.
- ◯ Yes, I frequently explore using AI to do a full analysis of all the data available to my project.

11. **Action planning.** AI is already used extensively in the recruitment industry to manage a client organisation, recruitment consultant and candidate through a recruitment journey. There are now AI products that guide employees, teams and leaders in their personal action plans that are also aligned to team-wide action plans. Would (do) you find this AI facility useful in your OD work?

Not useful useful Extremely useful

12. In recent months there has been a growing interest in the many ways that AI can demonstrate creativity in different areas of work. This is includes writing stories, producing art or even writing entire research papers. How might AI enable new and **creative thinking processes** in an OD project?

13. **Leading change.** AI products can provide an OD consultant, coach or OD practitioner a means by which to “deliver individual and team behaviour-change at scale”. They can schedule team meetings, monitor "homework for each team member" and generate reports for the next meeting. Would you find this useful in your OD work?

Not useful useful Extremely useful

14. **Evaluating and adopting change.** Employee feedback surveys can be an important part of an OD practitioner's process. AI technologies are able to give a real time assessment of the employee's sentiment towards an OD programme. Which statement is closest to your current opinion?

- ◯ I prefer to talk with employees in 1:1 interviews and focus groups to establish the success of an OD programme.
- ◯ I have not found an AI solution that fits my requirements.
- ◯ Yes, I already use AI products to get feedback from specific individuals, groups or departments to monitor the progress of an OD programme or project.
- ◯ Yes, I am designing my own employee sentiment analysis to capture the concerns and successes of my OD projects.

15. **Ethical AI**. "AI ethics is a set of values, principles, and techniques that employ widely accepted standards of right and wrong to guide moral conduct in the development and use of AI technologies" *(https://www.turing.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/understanding_artificial_intelligence_ethics_and_safety.pdf)*

Do you think values change according to the task in hand?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

16. **Ethical AI.** There are well over 100 ethical frameworks for AI being developed around the world. *(Jobin, A., Ienca, M. & Vayena, E. The global landscape of AI ethics guidelines. Nat Mach Intell 1, 389–399 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-019-0088-2)*

Please select the four values that you think should be a priority to those developing AI solutions for the workplace. To do this, reorganise the list so that your selection of four is at the top of the list. (use the up/down arrows to the right).

- Transparency – Ensuring that algorithms are explainable - there no black boxes
- Justice, fairness and equity – "Developers need to remember it is the peoples' data that is being collected"
- Non-maleficence - regularly evaluate the AI tools, metrics, and data ensuring safety of the user
- Responsibility and accountability - human in the loop – human oversight
- Privacy – maintain and review the relevant contractual agreements of the use of employee data
- Beneficence - the wellbeing of the employee (or user) is valued
- Freedom and autonomy - for the human employee in a decision-making process
- Trust - AI system that can gain, and maintain, trust as well as be trustworthy
- Sustainability- the actions of the AI considers the long term view
- Dignity - AI ensures that humans are treated with respect
- Solidarity - That AI works WITH humans to find a solution

17. **Legal considerations.** Worldwide, there are regulations being developed to maintain AI safety. Organisations are being encouraged to voluntarily sign up to an "AI code of Conduct" or develop their own frameworks when implementing AI in their business. For an OD practitioner this creates additional complexities. Please tick those regulations of which you are aware.

- ☐ General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - privacy regulations
- ☐ EU AI Act - a tiered structure based on risk assessment (EU)
- ☐ ISO 27001, ISO 27017, ISO 27018, ISO 27701 (Global)
- ☐ 1012-2016 - IEEE Standard for System, Software, and Hardware Verification and Validation (USA)
- ☐ The 2019 Algorithmic Accountability Act (USA)- with an annual impact assessment report
- ☐ Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights (USA) - Citizens are protected from any algorithmic discrimination, privacy intrusion, and other harms
- ☐ The Global AI Safety Summit led by the UK Government
- ☐ Principles for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the United Nations System (UN ITU)
- ☐ None of the above

Please include any additional regulations for Artificial Intelligence that could impact an OD practitioner.

18. **AI Safety.** In recent months there has been a growing international interest in regulating the development of AI and its applications. What constraints on the use of AI in OD would you recommend?

19. To what extent do you engage with AI technologies currently? Please tick the boxes where you have seen AI having an impact.

	I do not use any AI processes in my OD work	I use AI (such as Chat GPT) to help me with defining and designing my OD project	I use AI as as a tool for the delivery of my OD project	I use AI for evaluating my findings in my OD projects
Individual interventions (e.g coaching, personal leadership, spoken communication styles,...)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interpersonal interventions (e.g conflict management)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Group interventions (e.g team building, analysing team patterns,...)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intergroup interventions (e.g collaboration/conflict between departments, strategy implementation,...)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organisational interventions (e.g cultural change; mission/vision exercise, new organisational structures,..)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Total system interventions (e.g changing inter-organisation networks and eco systems)	☐	☐	☐	☐

The AI applications that I use now include:

20. To what extent will AI engage with the OD professional in the following areas in next 5 years? Please tick the boxes where you think AI will have an impact.

	OD practitioners will complete their tasks independently of AI processes	OD practitioners will lead using AI as a tool	OD practitioners will share decision-making with AI in a project	OD practitioners will be replaced by AI	Are you aware of an AI application on this level already? Please include example in the comment box
Individual interventions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interpersonal interventions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Group interventions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intergroup interventions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organisational interventions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Total system interventions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

21. What are the conditions for OD practitioners to have a Win Win scenario working with AI technologies?

22. What is the human process that we should never hand to an AI technology?

23. What is your feeling about the role AI is taking in OD and manging change?

I don't have a clue — I can't decide — Excited for the future

In line with the GDPR Regulations for handling data, all information will be managed by the ODNE Board in partnership with Strong Enterprises Limited. The data will be kept for 1 year, ending on 1 March 2025.

Appendix II: References

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All images by Freepik

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General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)- privacy regulations

- Developed and managed by Information Commissioners Office (ICO) UK GDPR guidance and resources | ICO (referenced 2/4/24)
- EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Compliance Guidelines (referenced 2/4/24)

Appendix III: Acknowledgements

It is important to recognise that this is the first collaborative research project between these organisations:

Organizational Development Europe (https://odneurope.org/),

Organizational Development Network (https://www.odnetwork.org/),

International Organization Development Association DA (https://www.iodanet.org/)

Organisation Development Practitioners Association (https://www.odpa-ghana.org/) .

We want to thank them for thinking along with us, and distributing the survey.