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Linking Managerial Coaching with Employees' Innovative Work Behaviors through Affective Supervisory Commitment: Evidence from Pakistan

Muhammad Ali[1]*, Basharat Raza[2], Wasif Ali[3], Nazish Imtiaz[4]

[1]Institute of Business Administration, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, [2]National College of Business Administration and Economics, Lahore, Pakistan, [3]University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan, [4]Department of Management Sciences, National Textile University, Faisalabad, Pakistan. *Email: mali@ibapu.edu.pk

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ABSTRACT

Organizations in the era of globalization are promoting managerial coaching (MC) as human resource development practice to improve employees' outcomes in the workplace. The existing literature on manager coaching lacks the empirical studies showing the linking MC with attitudes and behaviors of employees. To fill the gap mentioned above, this study explores the direct linkage between the MC and innovative work behaviors (IWBs) of employees as well as an indirect relationship through the intervening role of affective supervisory commitment (ASC). The 250 surveys were sent to employees working in the software industry of Pakistan, and 207 questionnaires were received back from the respondents, and the response rate was approximately 83%. The findings showed that MC had a positive influence on IWBs among employees. Results also showed that ASC mediated the link between MC and IWBs. ASC as a mediator has not been tested yet between the linkage of MC with IWBs. The implications of the study and limitations are also discussed.

Keywords: Affective Supervisory Commitment, Innovative Work Behaviors, Managerial Coaching
JEL Classifications: M12, M53

1. INTRODUCTION

Managerial coaching (MC) is becoming popular in the current age, and a lot of researchers are focussing on this area from the last several years. The number of research studies on MC is increasing rapidly. These researches are providing a general view of MC, on the other hand, a detailed empirical investigation is still required (Beattie et al., 2014) because coaching plays a vital role as an organizational strategy to improve the organizational performance. According to the International coaching federation (ICF, 2013), a limited number of empirical researches exist on MC; even a lot of organizations are spending vast amounts over it from the last 10 years, which is approximately $2 billion per year (Beattie et al., 2014).

Coaching by the manager is highly increased. According to UK managers, 80% of UK organizations expect their managers to provide coaching to their employees (CIPD, 2015). A lot of other countries are also following this trend like China (Wang, 2011), Pakistan (Ali and Aziz, 2018; Ali et al., 2018), Korea (Kim, 2014), Sweden (Rapp-Ricciardi et al., 2018). According to Fatien and Otter (2015), new trends have emerged; first, training as a responsibility of human resource managers has shifted to managers; second, managers would facilitate the learning and development of employees; third, leadership culture has increased (Raza et al., 2018). Managers play their roles as coaches to align employees with organizational values and strategies (Bainbridge, 2015). MC has defined as a developmental process that helps in improving the job performance of subordinates through goal

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setting and feedback (D'Abate et al., 2003). It is one of the critical organizational strategies to improve employee outcomes (Liu and Batt, 2010), such as problem-solving skills (Mulec and Roth, 2005), innovative work behaviors (IWBs) (Wang, 2013), organizational commitment (Elmadağ et al., 2008), and job performance (Hagen and Gavrilova, 2012). Coaching is considered an essential behavior of leadership that facilitates the learning and development of subordinates (Grant and Cavanaugh, 2004; Hamlin et al., 2006).

The behaviors of managers influence their subordinates, like transformational leadership and ethical behavior, which result in a positive effect on managers as well as subordinates (Gannon and Hendrickson, 1973). Managers should devote their energies to developing their subordinates, which is another managerial behavior, and this area still needs investigation. Ellinger (2003) argue that coaching doesn't require extra effort and it is not even a role behavior that should be necessarily done by managers, it can also be taken as motivating their employees not to oversee their work and proper utilization of time. As well as, coaching also increases the sense of accomplishment in managers, so that, the major purpose of the current study is to find out and explore the process of engaging employees in practices of coaching and finding out new lines of coaching which is yet to be explored and considered (Raza et al., 2018).

When we look at organizational system factors, managers should know how to create innovative behavior in employees in organizational purpose and motivate a sense of R&D in employees. Learning and performance of employees can also be increased through the style of leadership (Jones et al., 2006). In this way, the interaction of managers with employees influences them in a way that supports and facilitates employees and results in positive behaviors and attitudes at the workplace (Pastoriza et al., 2008). The uncertainty among employees at the workplace can be reduced by the assistance of managers (Rosen et al., 2011).

A model of leader-member exchange (LMX) describes the perception of employees about the behavior of managers and its quality. The mutual trust and respect among employees and managers are high-quality LMX, and low-quality LMX is vice versa, which leads employees to poor performance and negative perception about their workplace (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Hackman and Wagemen (2005) argue that achievement of high-quality performance and continuous improvement, managers should perform their role as coaches, as well as should go beyond the usual purposes of supervision and should not limit themselves in controlling but facilitate the learning of their employees. Knowledge sharing behavior, feedback, and recognition, advising, empowering, and caring response are considered as effective MC (Ali et al., 2019; Ellinger et al., 2008), which results in motivation among employees to achieve their goals. MC can be used as an essential tool for promoting innovative behaviors among employees (Raza et al., 2017).

Employees, as members of the organization, develop commitment with their organization and supervisor as well (Ali et al., 2019; Becker et al., 1996). The employees perceive their leaders or supervisor as representative of the organization and their supportive behaviors are essential determinants of subordinates' commitment with the supervisor or organization which result in their improved various work outcomes job satisfaction, and job performance (Huyghebaert et al., 2017; Vandenberghe et al., 2017; Chughtai, 2013). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the direct influence of MC on the IWBs of employees; and an indirect effect through affective supervisory commitment (ASC) to understand that how MC is crucial for increasing and encouraging the innovation in the organizations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. IWBs

The concept of coaching prevails in various fields of studies such as counseling, organizational and industrial psychology, sports psychology, clinical psychology, youth and adult education, and management (McLean et al., 2005). MC behaviors emphasis on advising, caring, empowering, recognition, feedback, and knowledge sharing; and MC can consider a strategy to overcome the poor performance in an organizational context (Ellinger et al., 2008). An effective coach openly communicates with subordinates, give value people over tasks, rely on team approach rather individualistic approach, and accept ambiguity in the working conditions (McLean et al., 2005). Previous studies have shown that manager-as-coach exhibits different behaviors as a facilitator of learning to enhance the employees' learning and development of job-related skills (Ellinger and Bostrom, 1999), which in turn positively influences the job satisfaction and job performance (Elmadağ et al., 2008). Therefore, the coaching skills of managers affect subordinates' learning and performance since the concept of coaching applied to management literature (Wang, 2013).

MC has become crucial for such a workplace that needs more innovative capabilities (Wang, 2013). Nonaka (1994) argue that socialization activities are vital to amplify the employees' tacit knowledge, and socialization between subordinates and managers can facilitate the coaching relationship. Employees need work-related and complicated tacit knowledge that exists within managers' insights can be shared through informal interactions between subordinates and managers, particularly when employees need to execute innovative ideas or convert creative ideas into a specific and viable product. Furthermore, an empirical study reveals that innovative behaviors of employees are affected by the manager's orientation to encourage knowledge sharing-behaviors among employees (Cabrera et al., 2006). Consequently, MC should foster innovative behaviors, and facilitate employees' learning in the workplace caused by daily interaction between subordinate and manager. When employees found their manager helpful and supportive in the form of MC, they become more committed with the pursuit of innovation in contrast to employees having a perception of low MC (Wang, 2013).

Hypothesis 1: MC positively influences the innovative IWBs.

2.2. MC and ASC

"A global psychological state that describes the association between organizations and employees" is known as commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The ultimate objective of commitment is concerned with employees' behavior, which shows the continuity of organizational membership (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Literature shows affective commitment (AC), continuous commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC) as major forms of organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 1993). AC means "an employee's identification with the organization, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization." NC is related to the ethical responsibility to show loyalty with the employer. Lastly, when an employee shows commitment to the organization due to the lack of alternative employment opportunities is called CC. These forms of organizational commitment predicted the various employee outcomes in different studies, such as job satisfaction, job performance, intentions to stay, reduced turnover intentions, absenteeism, and health (Ali et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 2002).

Hypothesis 2: MC positively influences the ASC of employees.

2.3. ASC as a Mediator

The mediating effect of ASC has not been tested in the relationship between MC and IWBs in previous studies. Existing literature explains the influence of ASC on different work-related outcomes of employees like turnover intentions (Vandenberghe et al., 2004), such as productivity and organizational citizenship behavior (Chen et al., 2002). Task performance includes "technical core behaviors in organizations," and contextual performance includes "supports a broader organizational, social, and psychological environment where technical core functions occur" (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994). The intervening role of ASC has been studied among the association of the psychological contract of employees with their OC (Kidron, 2018). ASC positively influenced the various attitudes and behaviors of employees, such as feedback-seeking, innovative actions on the workplace, and error reporting. He reasoned that when a supervisor interacts with subordinates, and provide timely feedback, focus on their issues, show concern for their career development in the organization, which in turn increase their outcomes as mentioned above. As mentioned earlier, the behaviors of the manager as a coach can increase their ASC, which leads toward IWBs (Chughtai, 2013).

Hypothesis 2: MC positively influences the ASC of employees
Hypothesis 3: Employee ASC is positively associated with IWBs
Hypothesis 4: MC indirectly influences IWBs through ASC.

3. METHODS

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

The population of this study consisted of employees working in five different software houses located in Lahore, Pakistan. We contacted the top executives of theses companies and explain the purpose of our study to get permission for data collection through convenience sampling. The employees working in the software need to be more innovative to survive in the industry. The managers were considered as coach and employees were considered as a coachee. The 250 questionnaires were distributed to employees, and 207 individuals participated in the study through filling surveys with an 83% response rate. The item-respondent ratio (1:5) was used to determine the sample size (1:6.90), which exceeded the recommended ratio (Bentler and Chou, 1987). We followed up the respondents through telephone and emails, and data collection was completed in 2 weeks.

3.2. Measurement

Park et al., (2008) scale consisted of 20-items that were used to measure the MC skills, which was modified and improved from the original scale of McLean et al.'s (2005). Manager-as-coach provides coaching to subordinates, which were assessed in this study. This scale consisted of five subscales having four-items for each that measure five dimensions of MC. A sample item for open communication includes "When I share my feelings with my manager, my manager appears to be comfortable." A sample item for the team approach includes, "When a decision is to be made, my manager prefers to participate with others to determine the outcome." A sample item for value people over task includes "In discussion with me, my manager focuses on my individual needs." A sample item for *accept ambiguity* includes "My manager views differences of opinion as constructive." A sample item for facilitating development includes "My manager appears to view learning and development as one of his/her major responsibilities." The overall Cronbach's α for this instrument was 89. We used a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) scale were adopted to measure the IWBs of employees consisted of five-items. A sample item is "In your job, how often do you make suggestions to improve current products or services?." ASC was measured using a five-item scale of Clugston et al. (2000) (e.g., "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career working with my current supervisor." Employees rated their behavior on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3. Data Analysis Strategy

The analysis has been done in this study using version 22 SPSS and AMOS. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for evaluating the measurement model and hypotheses were tested by applying structural equation modeling (SEM).

Table 1: Demographics of respondents

Demograpich Characteritics	Total	
	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	149	71.9
Female	58	28.4
Age		
21–25	20	9.66
26–30	77	37.19
31–35	54	26.08
Above 35	56	27.07
Education		
14 years	95	45.89
16 years	82	39.61
18 or above years	30	14.5
Job experience		
<1 year	29	14.00
1–5 years	59	28.50
6–10 years	44	21.25
Above 10 years	75	36.25

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha, correlations, and extracted variance

Variables	Mean	SD	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	1	2	3
Managerial coaching	3.51	0.34	0.89	0.59	0.77	(0.77)		
ASC	3.43	0.44	0.90	0.57	0.81	0.32**	(0.75)	
IWB	3.49	0.58	0.92	0.53	0.82	0.42**	0.34**	(0.73)

**p<0.01, *p<0.05, IWB: Innovative work behavior, ASC: Affective supervisory commitment

4. RESULTS

4.1. Study Sample Characteristics

In this study, out of 207 respondents, the male respondents were (71.9%) and female were (28.4%). The age of (37.19%) respondents was between 26 and 30. Furthermore, (39.61%) respondents were master education. The job experience of (36.25%) respondents was above 10 years (Table 1).

4.2. Measurement Model Evaluation

The reliability, convergent, and discriminant have been shown in Table 2. The reliability has been assessed through Cronbach's alpha; all three variables have >0.70 Cronbach's values. So, the data is reliable for further analysis (Kline, 2005). The convergent validity has been assessed through composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the values of CR and AVE should be higher than 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. So, in this, the convergent validity is satisfied, because the values of CR >0.70, and AVE were >0.50. The discriminant validity is assessed through the square root of AVE. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the values of the square root of AVE should be higher than correlations among variables. In the main diagonal, the values of the square root of AVE were higher than the correlations of variables.

The measurement model has been checked through CFA. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), there is necessary to perform CFA before doing a structural model for testing hypotheses. The fit indices values of measurement model shown good fit in the study (χ^2 = 168.225, df = 65, χ^2/df = 2.588, RMSEA = 0.056, NNFI = 0.97, CFI = 0.95). The values showed a good fit because these are under the suggested limits (χ^2/df< 3, RMSEA< 0.08, CFI> 0.95, NNFI> 0.95) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). The values of CFI and NNFI ≥0.90 also suggested a good fit by Cheung and Rensvold (2002).

4.3. Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model has been used for testing the hypotheses in this study. The fit indices values showed good fit in the study (χ^2 = 206.665, df = 87, χ^2/df = 2.375, RMSEA = 0.039, NNFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.94). In Table 3, there is found a positive impact of MC on IWBs and supported H1 with (β = 0.21, P <0.05). Furthermore, there is also found a positive impact of MC on ASC and supported H2 with (β = 0.28, P < 0.05). The third hypothesis also supported in this study, there is a positive impact of ASC on IWBs with (β = 0.30, P < 0.05).

The mediation has been checked through the structural model. The first structural model was used direct effect and second for indirect effect between the MC and IWBs through ASC (Iacobucci et al., 2007).

Table 3: Results of structural model

Hypothesized paths				Path coefficients	Observed t-value	P-value	Hypotheses
H1	MC	→	IWB	0.21	4.09	***	Supported
H2	MC	→	ASC	0.28	6.26	***	Supported
H3	ASC	→	IWB	0.30	5.88	0.02	Supported

***Significance at P<0.001 **Significance at P<0.01 *Significance at P<0.05. IWB: Innovative work behavior

Table 4: Direct and indirect path coefficients of mediation model

Paths				Direct effect	Indirect effect via ASC	Total effect
H4	MC	→	IWB	0.21*	0.17*	0.38*

IWB: Innovative work behavior, ASC: Affective supervisory commitment

4.4. ASC as Mediator

It has been checked the mediation model with the help of fit indices. The fit indices values showed good fit in the study (χ^2 = 206.665, df = 87, χ^2/df = 2.375, RMSEA = 0.039, NNFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.94). The direct effect of MC and IWBs is significant, which is showing in Table 4. On the other hand, the indirect effect of MC on IWBs through ASC also significant. So, we can say that effective supervisory commitment has partially mediated the independent and dependent relationship in this study, which supported H4.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study evaluated two paths; direct and indirect influences of MC on IWBs, the direct influence of MC on IWBs, and indirect influence through the ASC commitment. We have used data of 207 employees; as expected, SEM analysis showed that all of our hypotheses, H1, H2, H3, and H4 were supported. It showed that MC and IWBs have a positive relationship, and these findings are consistent with the result of previous studies (Wang, 2013). According to the findings of our research, it is also confirmed that having the ability of ASC plays a vital role as a mediator between MC and IWBs. Moreover, the software industry of Pakistan has an effectiveness of MC because past studies show that in the high-power distance culture, MC might not effective like low power distance culture or western culture (Rosinski, 2003).

The result showed that MC has become an effective managerial practice, organizational development strategy, and cost-effective training method to sharpen the skills of employees to survive in the dynamic and complex corporate environment. When a manager realizes his role as coach, he/she prefers the needs of individuals on the organizational tasks; subordinates can easily communicate the ideas with their supervisor, they promote the team culture in the organization because individuals have more learning opportunities

as team members. Organizations are heavily relying on different teams which are playing an essential role in dealing with the unseen problems. The managers as a coach have acknowledged the shift in their conventional role toward the facilitators of learning among the subordinates. This behavior of managers is vital to promote the significance of innovation among employees. The subordinates need manager support in the form of coaching to become a more flexible and innovative work in the organization. These coaching behaviors of managers also enhance the satisfaction and their commitment to the leader or manager, which leads toward the important work outcomes of employees such as IWBs. Therefore, the managers looking for increased AC among the subordinates and innovative behaviors to improve organizational effectiveness can use their coaching skills and behaviors.

6. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study have several implications for the management, supervisors, and employees within the organizations. The management needs to develop a supportive culture in organizations where managers' coaching behaviors have a reward for managers. The managers playing an active role as a coach should be differentiated from the managers with poor coaching skills or not executing the coaching behaviors in the workplace. Importantly, since coaching has become a popular HRD technique, leadership style, and OD strategy, the recruitment process has significant implications for the hiring of managers with coaching skills. The managers or leader needs to realize the importance of their coaching behaviors to improve the subordinates' attitudes and behaviors like ASC and IWBs. The organizations need perpetual innovation to survive and compete in this era of globalization.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research has limitations in many ways. First, the sample consisted of the software industry of Pakistan. Therefore, the result of the study cannot be generalized to other industries and cultures. Thus, the findings of the study will be carefully applied to different cultures and industries. Secondly, the self-reported data were collected from the individual respondents for both dependent and independent variables, yet this is the most commonly used data collection method used by the researchers for the data collection around the globe (Nair, 2007). This study tested only ASC as a mediator in the relationship between MC and IWBs; future studies can test various mediating variables like psychological empowerment, psychological wellbeing, psychological capital, and moderating variables such as tenure and experience in the industry. Future studies can use dyadic relationship data from both the manager and the subordinates.

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