

The Importance of Managerial Coaching in Public Organisation: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract: Managers are facing an ever more complex and demanding work environment that requires them to prioritize their organization's excellence. One of the significant hurdles they encounter is finding ways for their organizations to effectively compete not only within their domestic market but also on an international or global scale. In the organizational context, effective managerial coaching involves five dimensions to be practiced by the immediate superiors, the closest individuals to employees: practicing open communication, promoting working in groups, practicing employees' orientation, embracing diversity, and facilitating employees' development. Therefore, their coaching can help employees improve their work performance from time to time. The sensitivity of immediate superiors in enhancing employees' development by providing required resources for work assignments, such as budget, raw materials, and adequate work equipment to employees, providing clear goals and explanations of assigned tasks, leads to increased employee confidence in completing assigned tasks effectively. Providing sufficient resources enables employees to complete new and more challenging tasks.

Keywords: *Managerial Coaching, open communication, working in groups, orientation, employee development.*

1. Introduction and Background

Managers face a complex and challenging working world in their pursuit of organizational excellence. Competing successfully in the global and local markets is one of the main challenges. To achieve this, managers must re-evaluate the structure of their organizations and find ways to make their work more effective and efficient. This challenge is even more significant in the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0) era, which combines new computing and automation technologies. Consequently, there is an increased dependence on technology. Every business must, therefore, embrace this technology to stay competitive.

Nevertheless, the critical role of human resources in leveraging the benefits of computing and automation technologies will not be replaced by the increasing introduction and utilization of technology. Although human resources rely on technology, technology also relies on human competencies and readiness for successful implementation. According to Sung (2018), human capital is a significant issue in Industry 4.0 due to employee reluctance to change, skills gap, and threats to unskilled workers. Hence, management must act appropriately to shape a highly knowledgeable and skilled human capital ready to adopt new technologies.

Overall, this study aims to investigate the significance of the immediate manager's behavior as a coach and how this role and behavior can improve work performance. The public sector places a high value on work performance because the 2018 exit policy rules require that employees under the age of 80 be subject to immediate action or training to ensure that task performance can be improved regularly. The immediate leader's role as a coach can assist the organization in maintaining individual and organizational performance. As a result, this research course aims to identify the significance of the manager's role as a coach in improving employee performance.

Problem Statement

Human capital is essential to organizations because it serves to achieve organizational goals and develop and sustain innovation. Many businesses nowadays are oriented towards sustainability by focusing on achieving the triple bottom line. This orientation, among others, specifies that people are as important as profit. For example, customers expect organizations to provide better products and services in the Industry 4.0 era. It is

because advanced technologies can alleviate conventional processes, hence boosting innovation. By meeting customer expectations, organizations will be able to increase their profits. Nevertheless, it can only be materialized when organizations are willing to pay close attention to their human capital development and efficient utilization.

The role of human capital also goes beyond the organizational boundary. According to Kim et al. (2014), human capital influences a nation's income. According to Nafukho et al. (2004), Romer (1990) defined human capital as the total stock of human capabilities of an organization, nation, or economy. An economy with a larger human capital total stock tends to experience a faster growth rate. As such, organizations should be willing to make significant investments to improve human capital quality so that the economic well-being of a nation can also be improved.

Implementing the responsibilities played by the immediate management demonstrates the issue of managerial coaching in the public sector. From the middle of 2018 to 2022, the coaching practice in the public sector is still not clearly and thoroughly structured. According to the findings of interviews conducted with the Ministry of Human Resources' immediate managers, nearly 80% of the closest managers practice coaching. However, there is no clear structure shown to explain this process. Since 2016, there has been a problem with civil servants' work performance, and employees with a performance rating of less than 70 percent (70%) are subject to the exit policy. Besides the immediate manager, try to solve this problem by coaching and helping employees improve their performance regularly so they do not fall under the policy exit group.

The manager's role as a coach can not only improve employees' overall performance, but it can also make it easier for organizations to persuade. An excellent organizational culture always emphasizes the immediate supervisor's role as essential to their employees' development. Public service is an important service that will be a pillar of national excellence in the future.

The same decision will make them put their work on hold while they are away to attend the training program. Despite this, the human capital theory (Becker, 1964) operates under the assumption that employees invest in themselves to raise their future earnings potential. The theory posits that the earlier employees invest in their training and development, the longer they will reap the rewards of their investments. Hence, acquiring skills earlier is more profitable for employees. The same dilemma is encountered by management. Training participation will lower employee productivity, adversely affecting the organization's output. However, their productivity after the training will likely increase, increasing the organization's output. Besides, the human capital theory also indicates that the uncertainty concerning the return leads to the investment costs and benefits sharing between the organizations and employees in specific human capital (Delsen, 2007).

2. Literature Review

The development of coaching practices can be traced back to the early days of the industrial revolution, around the second half of the 19th century, in European countries and the US (Jong & Hartog, 2007; Kim et al., 2014). This approach has also begun to be discussed widely in the organizational context in the 1980s. Ellinger et al. (1999) have put forward the mentoring concept in the workplace, resulting in a more positive change in employees' behavior.

Coaching generally differs from mentoring in terms of duration, a short-term and long-term process. Besides, the former occurs in a formal and structured setting, while the latter focuses on the informal relationship between the mentor (immediate superior) and the mentee (supervised employee). In terms of focus, coaching is performance-driven, aiming at improving employees' on-the-job performance. At the same time, mentoring is development driven, looking beyond the current job function and taking a holistic approach to employees' career development. Simultaneously, mentoring focuses on development, looking beyond employees' current job functions and taking a comprehensive approach to their career growth and development.

According to a study conducted by Ahmad et al. (2021) at public organizations, managers can improve employee behavior by implementing behavioral coaching. The immediate manager's commitment can

encourage good work performance in an organization. Employees feel directed and guided when their immediate manager is a good coach.

Managerial coaching involves an indirect relationship between immediate superiors and subordinates and occurs continuously during working hours (Fournies, 1987; Hagen, 2013). The immediate superiors coach and support their supervised employees (Kim et al., 2014). In addition to giving instructions on specific tasks, they must also offer opportunities and valuable resources to their subordinates. It differs from other coaching types in terms of the way it has been implemented. Executive coaching primarily focuses on personal development rather than business outcomes. Communication skills improvement, motivational techniques enhancement, and the promotion of better teamwork skills are essential components of this personal development (Gan & Chong, 2015). In contrast, managerial coaching's primary objective is to facilitate the learning of subordinates within an organization.

A business's sales performance can be improved by using the closest manager as a coach. Employee behavior at work improves after learning through demonstrated behavior. Another effect is that exchanging knowledge and information improves the performance and quality of a person's employee in a public organization. In this situation, the immediate supervisors serve as coaches or learning facilitators; they enact specific behaviors enabling their employees (coachees) to learn, develop, and improve their job performance (Coimbra & Proença, 2022).

The primary purpose of practicing managerial coaching in organizations is to enhance organizational achievement by improving employees' work behavior (Ellinger et al., 2013). Through a structured system design, immediate superiors and subordinates are expected to adopt managerial coaching to cope with task conditions (Hashim, 2022). Specifically, the immediate superiors are the individuals responsible for guiding their supervised employees by transferring relevant working experience, knowledge, and skills while carrying out the core duties in an organization.

On the other hand, Hashim (2022) pointed out that subordinates bring their commitment to the task to their immediate superiors rather than derive commitment from their immediate superiors. They also highlighted that the subordinates should focus on producing results rather than scoring points with their immediate superiors. The current work performance can be improved through this structured learning system between the immediate superiors and subordinates. It is consistent with the current organizational environment, encouraging the employees' involvement or participation in a task and the power distribution to help them, especially in decision-making (Kim et al., 2013; 2014).

Applying managerial coaching is appropriate for the public service sector. In this sector, the managers responsible for managing human resources are immediate superiors. Therefore, the role of the immediate superiors extends beyond the essential functions of management, which are controlling, coordinating, organizing, and planning, including coaching their subordinates. The immediate superiors are expected to coach the employees in understanding the tasks to be carried out. It uses several approaches, such as carrying out tasks in groups, having open discussions, promoting diversity in view, and working toward employee and organizational development (McLean, 2020). Like organizations having to change over time, a superior should also change to adapt to the environment. Human beings cannot be organized like other resources, such as equipment, finance, and raw materials. Human resources involve the emotions and mind associated with human persuasion, influence, and powerful action system (Fayol, 1949). Therefore, the role of immediate superiors is essential in directing and leading employees in one direction.

3. Dimension of Managerial Coaching

In the organizational context, effective coaching practices refer to the role of immediate superiors, the closest individuals to employees, in practicing open communication, promoting working in groups and employee orientation, embracing diversity, and facilitating employees' development (Beattie, 2006, Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Graham et al., 1994). Therefore, their coaching can help employees improve their work performance from time to time.

Discussions on on-the-job training often highlight the importance of open communication as a critical factor in effective coaching (Peterson & Hicks, 1996). McLean and Tolbert (2007) emphasized that an open exchange of thoughts, feelings, and information is necessary to develop the interpersonal rapport required to influence others. Open communication helps immediate superiors and employees understand each other better and serves as the foundation for building a relationship. Evered and Selman (1989) emphasized the significance of communication in coaching effectiveness and suggested that researching coaching would benefit from exploring the qualities of listening and speaking between immediate superiors as coaches and employees. The specific skills facilitating effective communication include the immediate superiors' ability to share information, opinions, and values.

According to McLean et al. (2007), the openness and sharing of thoughts, feelings, and information is one way to create an interpersonal relationship that can help one influence others. For example, open communication in the management coaching of the federal government helps create a good understanding between the immediate superiors and their supervised employees. The understanding has directly helped to improve the effectiveness of tasks carried out by the employees. The effectiveness results from the employees' belief in their ability to carry out the assigned tasks well (McLean et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2014).

The next concept of management coaching, practiced by immediate superiors in the federal government's organization, suggests implementing group-oriented tasks. In working in groups, immediate superiors see employees as partners; the employees will usually be free to voice their views. Making decisions will be taken on discussion and joint agreement between immediate superiors and the employees. In this context, the immediate superiors will facilitate discussing the employees' ideas and views on certain matters. Joint decision-making makes the employees feel valued and needed within the organization. Therefore, the employees will be more confident in completing their assigned tasks (Kim et al., 2014).

Coaching practitioners in the federal government agree that effective coaching requires acknowledging individuals' needs and applying them to tasks. However, the organization prioritizes task accomplishments over people's needs, which requires a shift. This situation is also related to the concern of employees' needs and employees-oriented approaches (Evered & Selman, 1989). Besides, embracing ambiguity is also an essential characteristic of effective coaching. It allows immediate superiors in the government sector to be receptive to new ideas from others and consider multiple perspectives when working with employees and making decisions.

The notion of embracing ambiguity is closely linked to adaptability and cognitive flexibility, as Peterson and Hicks (1996) suggested. When faced with a complex and rapidly changing business environment, exploring various plausible answers rather than fixating on a single answer can help immediate superiors handle problems and inspire employees to embrace the possibilities presented by uncertainty. Effective coaching practices should clarify what can be clarified to alleviate the discomfort of uncertainty and encourage employees to seize the opportunities that arise from it.

Finally, another effective coaching skill involves various ways to facilitate employee development in this sector. Effective coaching demands immediate superiors possess certain techniques to aid employees' development. This managerial coaching aspect was not included in McLean et al.'s original four components (Peterson & Little, 2005). Based on their previous research, Peterson and Hicks (1996) defined this coaching as the learning facilitation aspect by defining coaching as the learning facilitation (Beattie, 2006). They aimed to identify how effective coaches aid the employees' learning and compared their findings to their previous research. Examples of specific behaviors include providing resources, giving feedback, setting objectives, and using examples, scenarios, role-playing, and questioning to encourage employees to think critically and creatively.

The sensitivity of immediate superiors in improving employees' development by providing required resources for work assignments, such as capital, raw materials, and adequate work equipment to employees, providing clear goals and explanations of assigned tasks, has directly led to increased employee confidence in completing assigned tasks effectively (Ellinger et al., 2013; Park, McLean & Yang 2008). Providing adequate resources enables employees to complete new and more challenging tasks.

4. Conclusion

Human capital attracts the attention of many practitioners and scholars since it is essential to organizations, including public service. The management has initiated several efforts to ensure the quality of human capital and its performance are always at its best. One of the efforts is to put managerial coaching into practice. Managerial coaching emphasizes the effective relationship between immediate superiors and their supervised employees within working hours. It aims at enhancing organizational achievements through the employees' performance improvement.

The application for future research focuses on managerial coaching practice and applies to private and public sectors. It involves five dimensions that should be effective for immediate superiors. The dimensions are practicing open communication, promoting working in groups, practicing employee orientation, embracing diversity, and facilitating employee development. Besides, three managerial coaching enablers are employees' commitment, motivation, and leadership style. The Coaching Assessment System is introduced to assess the managerial coaching practice. It is developed to assist organizations, including the public service, in enhancing task effectiveness and employee performance by enhancing the managerial coaching practice.

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