



IMPROVING EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH COACHING AND MENTORING

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the impact of coaching and training on employee effectiveness. The study carried out a critical review of the literature on the subject and the theoretical framework is developed on the social exchange theory. Coaching and mentoring as a form of training are key to improving employee performance and effectiveness. The paper contributes to the body of knowledge by establishing a positive relationship between the study variables and further recommends that organizations should adopt coaching and training as it means of improving employee performance as it allows the mentee to set their agenda and then the mentor guides how to accomplish those agendas.

KEYWORDS: Coaching, Mentoring, Task Performance, Adaptive Performance, Employee Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Human resource development is important to ensure service quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness in an organization to a complex and ever-changing business atmosphere (Ramesh, 2015). It is highly accepted that business companies cannot get long-term existence without focusing on the practices and strategies for empowering their employees through the provision of training and development (Nickson, 2007). Nevertheless, the importance of training to the employees is not just obvious for organizations but also significant for their individual development and empowerment because it is known to improve personal strengths and skills that are necessary for the upcoming career development the individuals (Aswathappa, 2007; Ramesh, 2015). There are different types of training, among these are a coach and mentoring which are considered as the spectrum of talent management because they either emphasized the development of special skills that benefit the company as well as the individuals it assists people to develop a new process of thinking which facilitate people to conquer obstacles and develop their careers through enhancing relationships with more experienced individuals (CIPD, 2014; Ramesh, 2015).

It also offers the potential to develop learning and teaching practices across the institution to enhance the working experience. It is recognized that many individuals have been coached and mentored by their senior colleagues within the organization in different ways over many years including directly supporting academic practice enhancement and professional development to acquire desired qualities (Peterson et al., 2010). Coaching and mentoring of staff can help organizations to enhance employees' performance and improve their employee satisfaction, quality of customer service, supervision, and overall cost for each employee (Peel, 2004). Armstrong (2009) posited that investment in coaching and mentoring in hospitality sectors can have a high significance in improving employees' performance since employees' performance is linked to knowledge and skills enhancement, positive attitudes, and improved confidence. In this regard, this paper examines the effects of coaching and mentoring on employee effectiveness.

According to Dessler (2011), the only process of equipping human capital with knowledge, skills, and capabilities to perform meticulous job tasks efficiently and effectively is the training of the individuals assigned to the particular job. Coaching and mentoring help to enhance the productivity and performance of the associated employees which leads to an increased quality of service and ultimately enhances the financial performance of the organization (Bhatia, 2006). Coaching and mentoring of staff can help organizations to enhance employee performance, and improve their strengths, employee satisfaction, quality of customer service, supervision, and overall cost for each employee (Peel, 2004). It is, therefore, the investment in coaching and mentoring in the hospitality sector can have a high significance in improving employee performance. The



performance of employees is linked to enhancing knowledge, skills, positive attitudes, abilities, and confidence (Armstrong, 2009). Thus, the enhancement of performance is becoming more mandatory for organizations because it can keep pace with the changing business environment and fulfills the gap between existing skills and the required knowledge to operate the business.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to ascertain the relationship between remote work practices and employee performance. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- i. Ascertain the relationship between coaching/mentoring on employee task performance
- ii. Assess the relationship between coaching/mentoring on employee adaptive performance

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are not new phenomena in the realm of human resource management training and development. Coaching and mentoring are human activities that are focused on the learning and development of individuals (Neupane, 2015). Coaching is a method of delivering large-scale results because it initiates a powerful working relationship and a unique communication style between participants. It can address goal setting, strategic planning, creating engagement, motivating and inspiring, teamwork, problem-solving, career development, delivering feedback, appraisal, and relationship alignment in the workplace in a variety of ways. (Whitmore, 2017). There are three key skills that coaches employ when guiding sessions to help customers or coachees achieve their goals:

1. Active listening
2. Compelling questioning
3. Providing feedback (Fazel, 2013).

Individual growth is the primary goal of coaching and mentoring, and many firms are now focusing on creating successful coaching and mentoring programs to boost employee morale and productivity (Hahn, 2008). To that end, they must justify their investment in such projects by determining their significance to the organization's existence and survival (Stewart, 2006). Because of rising client expectations and shifting needs, every company seeks to improve its performance. Coaching and mentoring are becoming increasingly important in accomplishing knowledge transfer. However, according to 2005 Accenture research, more than 40% of firms have no formal protocols for passing on the knowledge of retiring staff. In many of the firms that have handled the issue, the process consists of nothing more than an informal talk with co-workers before leaving. A study released by the International Personnel Management Association compared training outcomes without coaching/mentoring to training outcomes when paired with coaching/mentoring (Laabs, 2000).

According to Bartlett (2001), there is a positive relationship between coaching/mentoring and employee commitment, and HR professionals should adapt new research methods to demonstrate to organizational decision-makers that coaching and mentoring contribute to desired workplace attitudes, which may influence behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover. According to Lee and Bruvold (2003), comprehensive coaching and mentoring programs are favorably associated with productivity, staff retention, and organizational success. According to Raghuram (1994), coaching and mentoring are the foundations for building the necessary abilities for preserving competitive advantage and organizational success. Although the source of competitive advantage indeed refers to human resources rather than the strategies used to attract, utilize, and retain them, coaching and mentoring may be regarded as a solid beginning point for developing a pool of superior employee resources and talents (Agwu & Luke, 2015). In the business sector, the workforce is critical since it is the engine that drives business operations and organizational growth (Talukder & Jan 2017). Many intrinsic and external factors can influence workforce performance (Talukder & Jan 2017). Coaching and mentoring are essential extrinsic variables that drive workforce and corporate performance achievement (Sidhu & Nizam, 2020).

2.1.2 Task Performance

Task performance can be defined as the proficiency with which an individual worker executes major job-related tasks. The concept of task performance can be likened to other synonymous concepts such as – “job-specific task proficiency”, “technical proficiency”, and “in-role performance” like work quality, work quantity, and job knowledge.” (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Maxham, Netemeyer, & Lichtenstein, 2008). Task performance is defined as the proficiency with which job incumbents execute activities that are officially known as part of their jobs which add to the organization's technical core either directly by executing a part of its technical process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). The studies note that the level of contribution should be included in task performance; direct contributions in the



case of production employees or indirect in the case of supervisors. Furthermore, as days go by, more focus is on specific aspects of task performance such as innovation and customer-focused behavior which have significantly become relevant as institutions place a larger emphasis on customer service (Sonnentag & Frese, 2001).

Task performance is a job incumbent's behavior that relates to the individual's ability to transform raw materials into goods and services specific to the job and core technical skills. (Cheng, Chiu, Chang, & Johnstone, 2014). The key elements related to the task performance concept are knowledge, skills, ability, attitude, work itself, and commitment (Cheng & Osman, 2021). Murphy and Margulies (2004) define task performance as the accomplishment of tasks within an incumbent's job description. Researchers conceptualize task performance as behaviors that contribute directly or indirectly to the technical core and behaviors that are recognized as part of the job or job description. However, Rotundo (2000) notes that restricting a definition of task performance to include only those behaviors listed in a job description is problematic because job descriptions for the same job may differ from one organization to the next, which makes it difficult to compare performance across organizations.

2.1.3 Adaptive Performance

Adaptive performance is among the dimensions of individual work performance included in the heuristic framework. Adaptive performance is defined as an individual worker's ability to adapt to changes in a work environment or work condition (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). Being inclusive in the individual work performance framework, there are three reasons the dimension was accepted as a key dimension, such as firstly, as technological changes happen today, being capable to adapt to a changing work environment is progressively imperative. Secondly, as a concept, adaptive performance cannot be completely subsumed by the concepts of task performance, contextual performance or counterproductive work behavior since concepts like contextual performance consists of behaviors that positively influence the work environment while adaptive performance consists of behaviors in reaction to the changing work condition. Thirdly, there has been empirical evidence provided by Allworth and Hesketh holding adaptive performance as a distinct indicator of individual work performance (Allworth & Hesketh, 1997).

Due to the rapid changes in the business environment, adaptation is fundamental to professionals' ability to thrive in twenty-first-century organizations (Baard et al., 2014; Jundt et al., 2015). In organizational psychology and managerial literature, two constructs that address employee adaptation in the workplace are adaptability and adaptive performance (Marques-Quinteiro, Vargas, Eifler, & Curral, 2018). While both constructs (a) encompass the general idea of adaptation in the workplace and (b) require self-regulatory capacity (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002), adaptability and adaptive performance regard different forms of work-related adaptation. Whereas adaptability regards the degree to which individuals cope with, respond to, and/or support changes that affect their roles as individuals, adaptive performance expands this view by incorporating both the behaviors and the potential to enact adaptive behaviors (Griffin et al., 2007). While adaptability can be regarded as the outcome of self-regulation, it is a less proactive form of responding to change in the workplace (Pulakos, et al, 2000). Employee adaptive performance offers a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of individual performance under conditions of unpredictability (Pulakos et al., 2000). Scholars and practitioners such as Shoss, Witt, and Vera (2012) agree on the importance of adaptive performance in the workplace and there are studies detailing the drivers of adaptive performance.

The adaptive performance comprises the collection of behavioral responses in which individuals engage when anticipating or experiencing uncertainty. Adaptive performance is related to employee individual characteristics such as attitudes, personality, intelligence, and self-efficacy (Pulakos et al., 2002). Research has also found a positive relationship between adaptive performance and learning, climate for innovation (Han & Williams, 2008), and transformational leadership (Charbonnier-Voirin, Akremi, & Vandenberghe, 2010). Additionally, research has found evidence suggesting that adaptive performance can be enhanced through training. Chen, Thomas, and Wallace (2005) suggest that receiving training in regulatory processes (i.e., action, transition, and interpersonal processes) is positively related to adaptive performance.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory proposes that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. The purpose of this exchange is to maximize benefits and minimize costs (Cook, Cheshire, Rice & Nakagawa, 2013). According to this theory developed by sociologist George Homans, people weigh the potential benefits and risks of social relationships (Homans, 1961). When the risks outweigh the rewards, people will terminate or abandon that relationship. Most relationships are made up of a certain amount of give-and-take, but this does not mean that they are always equal. The social exchange suggests that it is the valuing of the benefits and costs of each



relationship that determine whether we choose to continue a social association (Homans, 1961; Cook, et. al., 2013).

The elements of this theory include rewards and the value of a reward, social rewards, costs, profit, equity, and distributive justice. In considering rewards Homans (1961) decided that some of the economic terms and conceptualizations did not apply as well to social behavior. He used the phrase “value of a reward” to emphasize the notion that any given reward might have a different value for different people. A reward of five dollars has a lot more value to a homeless person than to a millionaire. Homans’ definition of value is within the context of social exchange and thus is different from other ways of defining value. When rewards can only be met through interaction with another person, they are called social rewards. For example, being loved, respected, socially accepted, attractive to others, or having opinions and judgments approved by others, all depend upon other people. Rewards in social interactions include pleasure, satisfaction, gratification, and fulfillment of needs (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). One unique property of social rewards is that we can’t barter over most of them (Blau, 1964).

Homans (1961) originally defined costs as something of value that is given up; it can also be the withdrawal of a reward or punishment. Money is the most obvious “cost” that we exchange for some product or service, though we might also give friends money just to help them out. We also work in exchange for money which involves giving our time, energy, and skills. Carrying on a conversation costs time and energy; time and energy that might have been spent doing something else, even something more rewarding. The amount of time and energy expended in a conversation is affected by its importance and its intensity and depth. The value of time varies depending upon the demands placed on your time. Profit = Reward minus Cost. This simple economic formula was presented as applicable to social exchanges by Homans (1961). This definition implies that the greater the rewards and the fewer the costs, the greater the profit a person gains. Profits affect our decisions regarding our communication and relationships. We seek profitable interactions—we feel greater reward than cost. This theory is related to this study in the sense that when there are development opportunities in place for employees, it enhances their level of performance as they see the organization as having development plans for them and therefore perform at a higher level.

2.3 Relationship between Coaching / Mentoring and Employee Effectiveness

Adeogun, Abiona, Alabi & Yila, (2018) assessed the effect of coaching and monitoring on employees’ job performance among academic staff at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study used a multistage sampling technique to obtain data from ninety academic employees of the Faculty of the Agriculture University of Ibadan. The data were analyzed using Chi-square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study found a significant relationship between respondents’ marital status and job performance ($P \leq 0.05$). The study concluded that coaching and mentoring influence employees’ job performance positively among academic staff in academic institutions and recommended that the provision of a good work environment for coaching and mentoring of academic staff should be provided by university management.

Cherono, Towett, & Njeje, (2016) examined the influence of mentorship practices on employees’ performance in small manufacturing firms in Garissa County. The specific objectives conceptualized from the study include; establishing how leadership mentorship affect employee performance; assessing how innovative mentorship influence employee performance; determining how knowledge-transfer mentorship influence employee performance; and examining how talent development mentorship affect employee performance in small manufacturing in Garissa County. A cross-sectional survey design was used in the study whereby the respondents were all the employees included in the study. Questionnaires were administered to collect data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to arrive at conclusions on the relationships between study variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the set hypotheses and construct the model of interest. The study established a significant relationship between leadership mentorship, innovative mentorship, knowledge transfer mentorship, talent development mentorship, and the performance of the employees. The results of the study will contribute tremendously to better the management of firms through mentorship adoption practices. The study recommends that mentorship practices be considered as part of the organization's strategy to improve the performance of the employees.

Khakwani, Aslam, Azhar, & Mateen, (2011) sought to differentiate coaching and mentoring and acknowledge the impact of its practices on organizational performance and employees’ workplace learning. The current research attempted to investigate the aim, style, goals, and focus of coaching and mentoring and its mechanism for improved individual performance. Researchers have presented two major conceptual models of coaching and mentoring. The first model comprehensively characterizes strategic differences between two practices, whereas the second model explains the premeditated collision of said two practices with organizational performance.



Neupane, (2015) examined the effects of coaching and mentoring on Employee performance in the UK hotel industry. It also examines the extent of employee performance in association with coaching and mentoring and examines the effects of coaching and mentoring on overall organizational performance. This study is based on a cross-sectional method, deductive and quantitative approach. A sample of 172 managers and supervisors who have already worked as coaches or mentors in the respective hotels are chosen by using the convenience sampling technique. The survey strategy using structured questionnaires was used for data collection. The collected data were analyzed by using the arithmetic mean, correlation, and regression with the help of SPSS 20. This research confirmed that coaching and mentoring are positively correlated to employee performance and both factors have a significant effect on employee performance. As the regression analysis shows that coaching has significant effects on overall employee performance. Similarly, mentoring has also significant effects on overall employee performance.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Coaching and mentoring are very important as they are both used as training tools in organizations. Both of these tools are designed to improve employee effectiveness, confusion is created that whether these two approaches coaching and mentoring are different or the same because different researchers attempted to separate coaching from mentoring. Mentoring produces results for mentees while coaching gives returns around performances. The coach's main job is to motivate individuals to change their behaviors. Coach has a belief that learners can self-direct or for their benefit. Helping employees forces the coach to understand their current problems and then have a discussion with employees to improve their performance that is problem-centric. While the mentor advises employees on what is better for them but does not force them to do what has been saying him, instead lets them be free to choose what they like to do and then provides instructions to execute their choice in a better way. Therefore, we recommend that:

- Organizations should adopt coaching and training as it means of improving employee performance as it allows the mentee to set their agenda and then the mentor guides how to accomplish those agendas.
- Coaching and mentoring differ in their aims and styles thus organizations should understand which is needed at a point in time. Coaching aims at providing instructions while mentoring aims at the development of skills and abilities. Coaching and mentoring have a positive impact on employee performance.
- Coaching and training both play an important role in strategies related to professional and personal development and learning new skills and improving performance.

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