

COACHING STRATEGY AND BEHAVIOURAL ADAPTABILITY OF MULTINATIONAL OIL COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between coaching strategy and behavioural adaptability of multinational oil companies in Rivers State. The study concluded that coaching is a viable tool through which organizations can strengthen the adaptability of their employees. This finding of the study underscores the strategic importance of investing in comprehensive workforce development programs as a means to build a resilient, agile workforce capable of adapting to the evolving demands of the oil sector, ultimately driving organizational success and sustaining competitiveness in a volatile industry. Therefore, it was recommended amongst others that multinational oil companies in Rivers State should design training programmes that cover technical skills, leadership development, safety protocols, and industry-specific knowledge, thereby boosting their cognitive and affective adaptabilities, and as well as the overall performance of the organization.

Keynote: Coaching Strategy, Behaviourial Adaptability, Adaptive Coaching, Goal Oriented Coaching

INTRODUCTION

Organizational coaching has become an important strategy for corporate leadership development and change. As leaders at all levels and sectors face increasingly difficult challenges in complex business environments, the use of organizational coaching rises. Coaching involves a conversation focused on discovery and actions that help the person, group, or team being coached achieve the desired outcome or goal. The focus is on the person or team being coached, with the coach serving as a facilitator or guide in a collaborative process. The aim of coaching is to help the person or group become self-directed in their learning and development. Organizational coaching has been found to positively affect leadership, increasing charismatic behaviors and the ability to inspire and impact followers (Kampa-Kokesch, 2002). The results of a study done by the Corporate Leadership Council (2003) indicate that executive coaching helps improve management capabilities in experimenting with new approaches, shifting to an enabling style of managing, successfully dealing with difficult performance and team issues, and freeing up time for strategic thinking through more effective delegating. Although there is no standard definition of executive coaching, there are some agreements among the authors. Executive coaching can be defined as the helping relationship which is formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a professional coach. Typically, the coach uses a wide variety of behavioral science techniques and methods to help clients achieve a mutually identified job-related set of goals to improve his or her professional and personal performance (Dai & De Meuse, 2007). Coaching fosters the collaborative relationship among the executive, his or her boss, and an executive coach. Table 1 identifies several types of coaching that are common in organizations. One recent study identified several areas where executive coaching is used in situations where a mid-or high-level manager is "faltering" in some way or not performing up to expectations.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between coaching strategy and employee behavioural adaptability of multinational oil companies in Rivers State.

Coaching

Coaching becomes a remedial tool to enhance performance and effectiveness through eliminating unhelpful patterns of behaviors. The executive coaching process is also used as a part of succession planning processes or executive development initiatives. In these developmental situations a coach is hired to help the executive to function more effectively on the present job or to be well positioned for future career stages, tasks, or responsibilities (Ozkan, 2007). With all of these applications, it is no wonder that coaching is now firmly established as one of the top five leadership developmental choices in large organizations (Underhill, 2005). As the demand for coaching has increased so has the supply of those offering coaching services. Although there is little information on the size of the industry, the International Coach Federation (ICF) 2006 survey estimated that there were then approximately 30,000 coaches worldwide—an increase from their estimate of 16,000 in 1999 (International Coach Federation, 2006). And survey results by Manchester, Inc., indicated that 45 percent of CEOs reported their senior level personnel needed coaching services (Morris, 2000).

Within the realm of workforce development, coaching emerges as a dynamic and impactful dimension that facilitates individual growth, enhances performance, and drives organizational excellence. Coaching transcends traditional training methodologies by providing personalized guidance, continuous feedback, and skill enhancement opportunities that are tailored to employees' specific needs and goals. This essay delves into the significance of coaching as a strategic workforce development tool, exploring its multifaceted benefits, implementation strategies, and the broader impact it has on individuals and organizations.

Coaching plays a pivotal role in workforce development by offering a personalized and goal-oriented approach to learning and skill development. It stands as a powerful tool for improving employee performance, fostering leadership capabilities, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement within organizations. Coaching is designed to bridge the gap between potential and performance by offering targeted guidance and support (Grant, 2005). It enables employees to refine their skills, address weaknesses, and capitalize on their strengths to achieve higher levels of effectiveness.

Coaching provides a platform for grooming emerging leaders by focusing on leadership competencies, communication skills, and emotional intelligence (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). As a result, organizations can cultivate a pipeline of capable leaders who drive growth and innovation. Unlike generic training programs, coaching is personalized to each employee's unique needs and aspirations (Clutterbuck, 2015). This tailored approach ensures that learning experiences are relevant, engaging, and directly applicable to the individual's role. Effective coaching strategies encompass a range of practices that ensure meaningful interactions, developmental progress, and measurable outcomes. Organizations can foster a robust coaching culture through diverse strategies

Coaching, as a pivotal dimension of workforce development, manifests through various indicators that highlight its effectiveness and impact. These indicators—adaptive coaching, goal-oriented coaching, and systematic coaching—serve as essential components of successful coaching strategies that foster individual growth, skill enhancement, and organizational progress. This essay explores these indicators in detail, elucidating how they contribute to creating a robust coaching ecosystem within workforce development strategies.

Adaptive Coaching: Adaptive coaching emphasizes the tailored approach to cater to the unique needs and learning styles of each employee. This indicator recognizes that one-size-

fits-all solutions are insufficient in workforce development. Adaptive coaching involves identifying the specific challenges and developmental areas of an employee and providing guidance that resonates with their context (Clutterbuck, 2015). It reflects a commitment to acknowledging individual strengths, addressing weaknesses, and creating a learning journey that aligns with the employee's Coaches provide feedback that is uniquely tailored to the employee's current skill level, progress, and potential. This personalized feedback demonstrates an understanding of the employee's specific growth areas (Downey, 2003). Coaches guide employees in addressing challenges within their specific job roles and organizational context. This approach enables employees to apply their learning directly to their work responsibilities (Baker & Hart, 2004).

Goal-Oriented Coaching: Goal-oriented coaching is characterized by a clear focus on specific objectives, whether related to skill enhancement, career progression, or performance improvement. This indicator recognizes that coaching is most effective when it is aligned with tangible goals that employees aim to achieve. Coaches collaborate with employees to set measurable and achievable goals, map out action plans, and track progress over time (Whitmore, 2009). Goal-oriented coaching underscores the purposeful nature of coaching interventions, ensuring that they drive meaningful outcomes. Coaches work with employees to define clear and realistic goals that reflect their aspirations and developmental needs. These goals serve as the foundation for the coaching journey (Grant, 2005). Coaches assist employees in creating actionable plans that outline the steps required to achieve their goals. These plans encompass specific activities, timelines, and resources needed for success (Coutu, Kauffman, & Beauchamp, 2017).

Behaviour have been described as the way in which a person behaves in response to a particular situation or stimulus. It is also the range of actions and mannerisms made by individuals, systems or artificial entities in their various state and environment which determines how a person control of his or her actions. It pertains to the (aggregate of) acts or reactions that an individual produce in response to a particular circumstance. It may be induced by stimuli or inputs from the environment whether internal or external, conscious or subconscious, covert or covert, and voluntary or involuntary. Behaviour is therefore a response(s) which is observed directly or indirectly. Direct observations is made possible by studying the responses of people to a work environment while indirect observations borders on the decision making processes and attitudes of each individual.

A gap in existing research lies in the limited exploration of how workforce development strategies (in-service training, mentorship, and coaching) influence employee adaptability (affective, behavioral, and cognitive) within multinational oil companies in Rivers State. While studies like Victor (2022), Emere and Aydin (2009), and Oladimeji (2018) have examined human capital development and its impact on performance and motivation in various sectors, they do not address employee adaptability in the oil industry. Research by Franklin *et al.* (2014) and Ekundayo (2015) focused on training and performance in oil services, but missed adaptability as a key outcome. Similarly, studies by Sampson *et al.* (2016) and Gabriel and Chukwuma (2016) examined human capital development in different sectors without considering adaptability. Given the unique challenges in multinational oil firms, understanding how workforce development strategies impact adaptability is crucial for enhancing employee resilience and organizational success. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between coaching strategy and employee behavioural adaptability in the oil sector in Rivers State.

Behavioural Adaptability

It is important to note that Organisations are composed of different individuals with different personality forms, attitudes, values, perception, motives, aspirations and abilities which

determines how they adapt to work conditions hence the need to understand behaviour and how it affects or work in relation to employee adaptability because the level of, quality and capacity of an individual to adjust to new conditions is on one hand a direct consequence of the conscious or subconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary mannerism of the person. With respect to employee adaptability, behavioural adaptability relates to the way a person manages his or her behavioural dominance, influence, steadiness and conscientiousness in relation the work environment they find themselves (.). It is a person's willingness and ability to adjust their personal work ethic to meet the work needs of the organization and the work situation at hand.

Thus, it is an adjustment in attitudes, patterns, or habits of an individual worker relating to the use of adaptive skills towards complete obedience or otherwise and the willingness to being adaptable which enables each worker to interact more productively with other workers thus helping to avoid conflict.

Thus, behavioural adaptability is one which focuses on what individuals do with respect behaviours and performance in the workplace; if these behaviours lead to successful performance, they are considered adaptive. For instance, how employees respond to changes in their work content and how well the workers generalize and transfer knowledge and skills to match with the changes or how employees adapt to new work roles and new work processes all boils down to the behavioural aspects of adaptability. Hence, behavioural adaptability directly defines individual adaptability as the potential underlying adaptive behavior and performance (Griffin et al., 2007). In all, behavioural adaptability as a changes response mechanism provides greater resilience and quicker recoveries and diminish the impacts of workplace changes when there is proper mindset reorientation and alignment to the change and its outcome. Behavioural adaptability serves as a challenge tester (a situation that tests your abilities or is seen as difficult), adaptive mechanism first, to a change outcome (to a new or different situation) and secondly a novelty (an original or unusual situation) and thirdly an uncertainty (an unsure or unknown situation) that arises from resilient behaviour that help overcome threat (a situation likely to cause damage or danger), an adversity (a difficult or unpleasant situation) and confrontations (hostile or argumentative situations). In all, individual behavioural adaptability (IBA) is basically concerned with the adaptive performance of employees as they adapt to their current work environment and condition and match their work behaviour with that concerning organizational change, workplace change, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, uncertainty, or even conservation of resources. Thus, IBA is the quality of being able to change and adapt behaviour to the demand of an inclusive work organization, the ability to manage change transitions and requirements at work, as well as being able to effectively manage change related stress through behavioural competencies that enable each employee to manage themselves in relation to the demands of conformity and/or change in particular situations (Park & Park, 2019; Piórkowska, 2016).

Theoretical Review

Social Capital Theory

One of the key scholars associated with social capital theory is Robert D. Putnam. In his influential book "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community" (2000), Putnam explores the decline of social capital in the United States and its implications for civic engagement and community development. He argues that the weakening of social networks and trust has led to a decline in participation in civic organizations, which has negative consequences for democracy and social cohesion. Another important figure in the development of social capital theory is Pierre Bourdieu. In his book "The Forms of Capital" introduces the concept of social capital as one of three types of capital, alongside economic

and cultural capital. He highlights how social capital can be converted into other forms of capital, such as economic advantages or educational achievements.

The relevance of social capital theory to workforce development lies in its recognition of the significance of social relationships and networks in shaping individuals' access to employment opportunities, job information, and career advancement. Social capital can provide individuals with valuable resources such as job referrals, mentorship, and access to influential contacts within industries or organizations.

A study by Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn (1981), examined the role of social capital in job search processes among young adults. The findings indicated that individuals with higher levels of social capital were more likely to find employment quickly and secure higher-quality jobs compared to those with lower levels of social capital.

Furthermore, Nahapiet and Ghoshal ((1998).) propose a framework for understanding how social capital operates within organizations. They identify three dimensions of social capital: structural, relational, and cognitive. Structural social capital refers to the patterns of relationships and connections within a network, relational social capital focuses on the quality and strength of relationships, and cognitive social capital pertains to shared norms, values, and trust within a network. The authors argue that these dimensions of social capital influence knowledge sharing, innovation, and collaboration within organizations.

In the context of workforce development, social capital theory suggests that fostering strong social networks and relationships can enhance individuals' employability and career prospects. Building social capital can be achieved through various means, such as participating in professional associations, attending networking events, engaging in mentorship programs, and leveraging online platforms for professional networking. Overall, social capital theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of social relationships and networks in workforce development. It highlights the importance of investing in social connections and trust-building activities to enhance individuals' access to resources and opportunities in the labor market.

The social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social relationships, networks, and trust in fostering economic development. It suggests that social connections and networks can provide individuals with valuable resources, information, and opportunities for skill development. According to this theory, investing in social capital leads to increased collaboration, innovation, and productivity within organizations and communities.

Assumptions:

- 1 Social relationships and networks play a crucial role in accessing resources, information and opportunities.
- 2 Trust and cooperation among individuals are essential for effective collaboration.
- 3 Social capital can be built through participation in community activities, professional associations, and informal networks.
- 4 Social capital enhances the flow of knowledge and information, leading to innovation and improved performance.

Implications:

- 1 Policies should promote social interactions and networking opportunities within organizations and communities.
- 2 Collaboration and teamwork should be encouraged to foster the development of social capital.
- 3 Investments should be made in building strong relationships and trust among individuals.

- 4 Organizations should create a supportive and inclusive culture that values social connections.
- 5 Governments should facilitate the creation of platforms and initiatives that promote social capital development.

Empirical Review

Roger and Tom (2014) worked on workforce development is an emerging field of practice, one that is increasingly gaining its place in the sun in government policies and organisational practices. However, what Skills Australia has identified as hampering endeavour to build on successful experiences and learn from one another is the diversity of views and understandings. The book therefore serves as a contribution to the demystifying of the notion. This final chapter distils five key messages that emerge from the previous chapters, and summarises the main strategies and practices that have been suggested by the chapter writers. Eight challenges in implementing workforce development are then discussed. The study concludes that, while it is indeed important to identify and define its components, workforce development is 'more than the sum of its parts' as the critical aspect is conceptualising how these components need to be configured and aligned in particular organisational contexts.

Victor (2022) carried out a study that focused on human capital development and corporate survival of 19 selected private institutions in Rivers State. The main objectives were to examine the relationship between dimensions of human capital development (employee empowerment and training) and measure of organizational survival (Adaptability). The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design. The population for the study was 14 selected Institutions, census techniques was adopted that give total respondents. Structured questionnaire was used. Data was analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation. The findings show that dimensions of human capital development (employee empowerment and training) correct with measure of corporate survival (Adaptability). Therefore, the study concluded that dimensions of human capital development enhances survival of the organization. Hence, the study recommended that Private firms should adhere to the concepts for their survival.

Zhuwao (2017) investigated the effects of workforce diversity on employee performance in a selected higher educational institution in South Africa argues that various legislative measures were introduced by the government in order to shape the workforce in organizations. However, these legislative measures expressly focus on compelling organizations to embrace diversity and thus not considering the business need of it and how it influences employee behavioral outcomes such as employee performance. It is upon this backdrop that the study investigated the effects of workforce diversity on employee performance. A cross-sectional research design was used and a random sample (n = 267) was chosen by dividing employees into homogeneous strata of academic and non-academic employees. A Workforce Diversity Questionnaire and Employee Work Performance Questionnaire were administered. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between independent variables (gender diversity, ethnic diversity and educational diversity) and the dependent variable (employee performance). The relationship between age diversity and employee performance was not significant.

Emere and Aydin (2009) investigated the impact of personal development trainings on employee motivation: a case study from Turkish pharmaceutical sector. In the recent years, motivation has been a concept given special importance in management and employee motivation has been considered as a key factor in the success of companies. It is also known that companies spend high amounts of money on trainings each year to increase productivity and stay competitive in the face of global competition and rapidly changing environment. In

this article the authors develop a model to investigate whether there is an impact of personal development trainings on the motivation of employees working in a small-sized multinational company in the Turkish pharmaceuticals industry or not. For this purpose, a survey is conducted among 81 employees of this company working both in the head office and in the field as a special case through a questionnaire. Obtained results with a response rate of 94 percent show that there is a strong positive relation between personal development trainings and employee motivation. As a general conclusion, this study presents a positive implication for the relationship between personal development trainings and employee motivation. Further research will focus on conducting the study with larger samples in the Turkish pharmaceuticals sector to generalize the model.

CONCLUSIONS

The study conclude that coaching is viable tool through which organizations can strengthen the adaptability of their employees, among others. These strategies empower employees to improve behavioral adaptability by adjusting actions to new environments. Through consistent mentorship and coaching, employees gain personalized guidance that enhances their ability to navigate complex industry challenges, while in-service training equips them with the technical and soft skills required to stay competitive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Multinational oil companies should promote a culture of lifelong learning by providing resources for self-directed learning and professional development.
2. Multinational oil companies should implement recognition programs that acknowledge and reward employees who actively engage in training, mentorship, coaching, and adaptability initiatives.
3. Multinational oil companies should encourage collaboration between different departments and teams to facilitate knowledge sharing and enhance employee adaptability.
4. Multinational oil companies should evaluate the effectiveness of workforce development strategies through continuously monitor and evaluate the impact of workforce development strategies on employee performance, job satisfaction, and organizational outcomes.

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