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IMPACT OF MANAGERIAL COACHING ON EMPLOYEE THRIVING AT WORK: THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to look at the influence of managerial coaching on employees thriving at work through the moderating effect of perception of organizational politics. The study strives to fill the research gap of limited available literature on the effectiveness of managerial coaching. Data is collected from the employees working in the pharmaceutical sector in Lahore, Pakistan. By using correlation and regression analysis technique with 261 workers' sample, results indicate that managerial coaching is positively correlated with thriving at work. The results also exhibit that the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work is moderated by the perception of organizational politics. Furthermore, the practical implications of this study are discussed.

Keywords: *Managerial Coaching, Thriving at Work, Perception of Organizational Politics.*

INTRODUCTION

The organizations are trying to access the dynamic markets in the global competitive environment, and job atmosphere is changing continuously in all over the world (Kalleberg, 2018). The achievement of sustainable competitive advantage requires extraordinary efforts of the organizations in the rapidly changing environment (Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015; Hagen, 2010). The managerial activities are becoming crucial for increasing the performance of employees in the workplace (Pousa & Mathieu, 2010). Managerial coaching thus has become an important HRD and organizational development strategy to enhance the salespersons' skills in the organizations (Pousa, Mathieu & Trépanier, 2017, Dahling, Taylor, Chau & Dwight, 2016; Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel & Kennedy, 2008).

Coaching has become increasingly vigorous together with a set of activities for supervisor, human resource development experts, and subordinate's accomplishment (Park, 2007). Human resource development specialists, academics, training related professionals and organizational psychologists are exerting effort to uncover the effectiveness of managerial coaching as a practice in the workplace (Woo, 2017; Kim, Egan, Kim, & Kim, 2013). Turnover intention rate is negatively related to managerial coaching (Kim, Eom, Kim, & Youn, 2015), and OCB is positively related to managerial coaching (Kim & Kuo, 2015). The coaching behaviors of a supervisor fosters the sense of responsibility among the subordinates and in exchange, employees also respond favorably towards the achievement of organizational goals (Sonenshein, Dutton, Grant, Spreitzer, & Sutcliffe, 2013). In a political environment, employees perceive that their supervisor is not treating them equally which distorts their relationship and result in lower employee job performance (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009), thus, aggravates adverse outcomes like withdrawal behavior, absenteeism, low job performance and job worries (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992).

Managerial coaching is a developmental relationship between the subordinate and the supervisor, where subordinate is the ultimate beneficiary of this relationship (Park, 2007). The support of top management is essential to develop the coaching environment in the organization to increase the learning, efficiency, and effectiveness of employees in the workplace (Ratiu, David & Baban, 2017; Ellinger, Ellinger, Hamlin, & Beattie, 2010). Managerial coaching has become a very famous technique for HRD specialists to improve organizational practice, creating a learning environment for employees and for their career development. It is also necessary for the growth of organizational members, management of human capital in the strategic perspective, managing talent, and fostering improved work environment to achieve organizational goals (Gilley, Gilley, & Kouider, 2010). Hence, among the well-known outcome variables of the managerial coaching, job performance is a significant variable, as the effectiveness of managerial coaching can be understood in a stint of employee's performance (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003). Moreover, concentrating on organizational change and learning at the place of work dynamics, it has been evident that organizations are assigning specific responsibilities, related explicitly to HRD roles to their supervisors and executives (Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016; Liu & Batt, 2010). The fluctuation of job duties is persistent in organizations as the managers attempt to accomplish the roles of recognizing and assigning the human capital in specific jobs, to attain business objectives (Muhlberger, & Traut-Mattausch, 2015; Ellinger et al., 2003). All these desired outcomes and responsibilities are achieved with the support of managerial coaching behavior (Turner, & McCarthy, 2015; Kim et al., 2013). Henceforward, to support the development of employees, the managers are required to act as educators (Cohen & Tichy, 1998), and coaches (McGill & Slocum, 1999).

The concept of "thriving at work" is now getting the attention in the workplace conduct, movements and constructive organizational scholarship (Abid, 2016). Spreitzer et al., (2005), describe thriving at work with the mixture of both knowledge and vitality. Elliott and Dweck (1988), discuss and elaborate that the knowledge factor of thriving involves in gaining and implementation of new sciences. Hence, Knowledge and vitality are the positive feelings to encourage vigor and enthusiasm in employee's performance (Nix, Ryan, Manly & Deci, 1999). Moreover, knowledge and vitality are further investigated individually. Latest research focused on thriving at work designating utility while considering knowledge and vitality jointly (Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson & Garnett, 2012). Henceforth, both the psychological conditions together in the workplace relate to the positive consequences for the employees as well as the organizations (Ren, Yunlu, Shaffer, & Fodchuk, 2015; Spreitzer & Porath, 2012; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Further, Abid and Ahmed (2016), describe thriving at work with three-dimensional factors being cognitive; effective, and behavioral. When employees receive psychological capital from their organizations, they feel thriving at work (Iverson, 2017; Frazier & Tupper, 2016; Paterson, Luthans & Jeung, 2014). Thriving at work can be increased through promotion (Wallace et al., 2016), and the employees, who have a core self-evaluation personality trait, create an environment of thriving at work (Walumbwa et al., 2017). Another study conducted by Jiang (2017), found a positive relationship between proactive personality and thriving at work. The employees, who are conscientious, and extrovert feel more thrived at their work environment (Hennekam, 2017). Employees behave creatively and show favorable attitudes when they feel thrive in their workplace as a result of managerial coaching (Sonenshein et al., 2013).

It is observed that the perception of organizational politics will moderate the affiliation between managerial coaching and thrive at work.

“Organizational politics denotes self-interested activities which are not supported by the organization, and the consequences of these behaviors are negative for their employees and organizations” (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Perceptions of organizational politics (POP) are the magnitudes to which employees observe political actions as prevalent in their workplace. These behaviors have been discussed in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which argues the employee exchange effort, abilities and time for reward in the organization. In politically oriented organizations, distribution of rewards is based on favoritism, not on merit system (Rusbult, Campbell & Price, 1990). For fair attitude, a leader must create a healthy and fair environment in the organization, as proposed by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). If organizations want to succeed, then it is necessary to create a balanced relationship between managers and the employees (Gadot, 2007).

POP has a negative influence on employee outcomes like job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment (Butt, Imran, Shah & Jabbar, 2013). POP creates a stressful environment and has an adverse effect on job attitude and performance (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989). Therefore, it is projected that perceptions of organizational politics will moderate the relationship between managerial coaching and employees’ thriving at work.

Despite increasing attention and related practice-oriented actions which emphasize the significance of the manager acting as coach, research on managerial coaching is scant (Beattie, Kim, Hagen, Egan, Ellinger & Hamlin, 2014), the results of studies on managerial coaching effectiveness are infrequent (Boyatzis, Smith, & Beveridge, 2012). Existing studies have explored a few outcomes like in-role enactment, organizational citizenship behavior of individuals, and organizational citizenship behavior of the organizations (Kim & Kuo, 2015). Furthermore, thriving at work is an essential outcome of managerial coaching which has been continuously recognized (Kim & Kuo, 2015). Another significant research gap in the literature on managerial coaching is an investigation of its practices and effectiveness outside the Western countries (Beattie et al., 2014). The current study tries to fill the research mentioned above gaps in the literature on managerial coaching. So, the objective of this research is to examine the association between the managerial coaching and thriving at work with the moderating role of POP. Thus, this study determines the results of following research questions:

- What is the relationship between the managerial coaching behavior of a supervisor and thriving at work?
- Does the association between managerial coaching and thriving at work is moderated by the POP?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The perceived organizational support theory discusses the connection between managerial coaching behavior and thriving at work, where it elaborates the exchange between the organization and employee (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis, 1990). Employee perception of organizational funding is appreciated as psychological contentment and assertion that which employees can discover from organization to execute their tasks and obligations together with inspiring conditions (Abid, Zahra & Ahmed, 2015). Kottke and Sharafinski (1988), alleged that since influential leaders and managers do as the exemplification of the organization, an employees' potency to be familiar with their leader and manager's positive coordination concerning them as a specimen of organizational support. Moreover, with the perception of support of the organization (Levinson, 1965), employees might feel valued to take care of organizational well-being and organizational success.

In the coaching setting, managers do their job duties as a coach; subordinates recognize their natural processes as benevolence (Hagen, 2010). They accomplish diverse activities to provide objectives and means to provide immediate feedback for performance enhancement, character-forming valuable instructions, on-the-job opportunities for employees learning and development, gratitude, reward and expediting employee's development and achievement (Kim, 2014). When subordinates perceive supportive behavior as coaching relationship with supervisor, subordinate feels the duty to react by refining the advantageous approaches and thriving at work (Sonenshein et al., 2013). Hence, the theoretical model advanced by Spreitzer et al. (2005), recommends that when employees thrive at work, they cautiously communicate their subordinates to improve interactive properties and to take attention of the requirements of the others at the workplace (Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Therefore, promoting the arguments, organizational support theory explains the exchange relationship between employee and organization as actions performed by a manager or leader perceived as the spokesperson for the organization. When employees perceive the favorable actions from their manager or supervisor, organizational support enables them to fly high at work. From the social exchange viewpoint, in a political environment, employees feel a lack of transparency, ambiguity, uncertainty about the organizational reward system (Hall, Hochwarter, Ferris & Bowen, 2004). So, POP will moderate the relationship between managerial coaching and thrive at work.

Therefore, grounded in the organization support theory, in this study the theoretical model contains managerial coaching eventually influencing thriving at work with the prerequisite of the moderating effect of perception of organizational politics. Therefore, the above literature depicts our theoretical framework as follows:

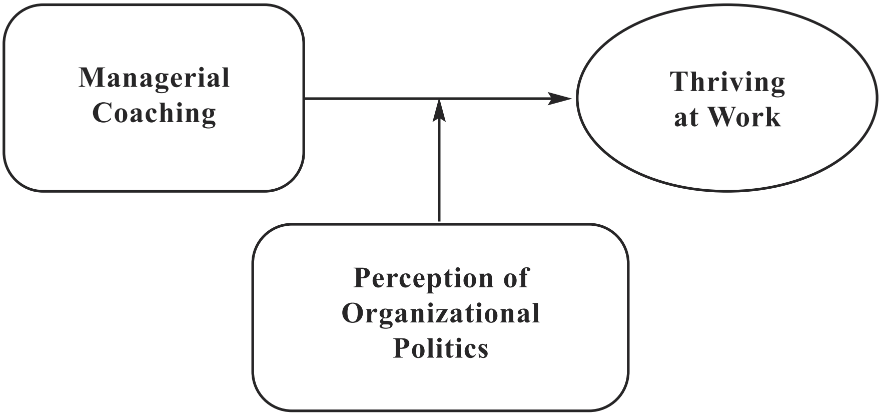

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Managerial Coaching, Thriving at Work and POP

Managerial coaching is “a method of facilitator of learning which is provided by a supervisor or manager, enabling the employees to learn and enhance the performance” (Ellinger et al., 2010). It is considered a practical and development performance of subordinates (Jones et al., 2016). Coaching mulls over as being extricated from old-style management because it consists of self-directed, empowering, supportive and teamwork strategies as an alternative of a dependent on the steering, observing, and inflexible—where it is prepended an emergent collaboration in the workplace setting (Muhlberger & Traut-Mattausch, 2015; Boyatzis et al., 2006). Moreover, managerial coaching enactment is improved by quick feedback, training and mentoring (Kim et al., 2013), giving clear goals, acting as a role model, create learning opportunities and refining the prospects of accomplishment and betterment of employees (Kim, Egan, & Moon, 2014). Many researchers mark managerial coaching with mounting a relationship, active listening abilities, unique and logical skills, rapid response, and openness of new beliefs in a work setting. Further, it also appreciates the viewpoints of employees in decision making, cognitive abilities, exposed communication, amplification of goals and objectives, teamwork and establishing a cooperative atmosphere in the organization (Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck, 2010). The supervisors, who need to establish a healthy and beneficial relationship for the subordinates, should adopt the helping behavior and appreciate the effort of the employees (Zhang, Tsui, Song, Li, & Jia, 2008). Which in turn would create and healthy environment (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). In this situation, employees are self-assured to accept threats, as they accept they are backed by the supervisor (Abid et al., 2015; Kahn, 1990), and consider perceived organizational support by their organization. When employees perceive support by their organization, they increase enthusiasm for creativity and new knowledge. Thus, healthy and supportive environment enhances thriving at work (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 2001) and in return employee personates constructive attitude (Kwon, 2015), and share encouraging opinions (Yang, Cho, Kim, Eom, Kim, & Youn, 2015), towards their determination and obligations. The work-family balance enhances thriving at work (Russo, Buonocore, Carmeli, & Guo, 2015). When employees are empowered in their work setting, then they feel a sense of thriving (Li, Liu, Han, & Zhang, 2016). When coaches are transformational leaders, then employees perceive contextual resources and in return, feel thriving at work (Hildenbrand, Sacramento, & Binnewies, 2016; Niessen, Mader, Stride, & Jimmieson, 2017). Therefore, in coaching behavior, the managers deliver quick feedback for improving the performance. The subordinate feels the responsibility to answer by refining the promising approaches and thriving at work (Sonenshein et al., 2013). Hence, based on the contextual and practical research grounds, the first hypothesis is constructed as:

H1: Managerial coaching is positively related to employee thriving at work.

POP is a personal viewpoint and self-serving behavior about the environment, which is observed by an employee in a working setting. By self- determination theory, employees feel proficiency, independence, and understanding when they are intrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 1985). But in the political environment, where decisions are taken by some authorized persons and power distributed through favoritism, employee's intrinsic motivations, proficiency, and performance are reduced and consequently create workplace imbalance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, it triggers increased turnover intentions, counterproductive and withdrawal behaviors, and absenteeism, which is detrimental to organizations (Rodell & Judge, 2009). Previous research has explored that in political environment employees' decrease job satisfaction, commitment and job stress is accelerated (Atinc, Darrat, Fuller, & Parker, 2010). A Manager improves the employee performance by creating a learning environment in the organization (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). Thrived employees take creativity at their workplace for improvement of performance (Porath et al., 2012).

Employees see a threat when they notice widespread organizational politics in the work environment. In these circumstances, employees often lose the confidence and support (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). Thus, we can say that POP moderates or weakens the positive relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work.

H2: POP moderates the relationship between executive coaching and thriving at work.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedures

The respondents in this study were full-time workers of the pharmaceutical sector of Lahore, Pakistan. This model is applied to the pharmaceutical industry because this sector is adopting much motivational managerial services to enhance their sales and market share through their workforce. Managers or employees of this industry may behave politically for gaining and speedy career promotions. So, the environment of the pharmaceutical industry is more conclusive to respond to the research questions devised and suitable for this study in Pakistan. For administration of the questionnaires, Random selection 380 pharmaceutical employees was made through HR managers. Structured questionnaire was utilized to collect cross-sectional data from them and were translated from English to Urdu for better understanding (Brislin, 1980). The questionnaires were directly sent to sales representatives with permission of their organization head in sealed envelopes. The sample of this research study consists of 261 (response rate approximately 69%) respondents through simple random sampling technique. This technique was used for generalizability of the study and avoid biases. In this study, 83.9% respondents were male, and 16.1% were females, 59.8% were in the 26 to 30 years' age bracket, 60.9% had a master's education and 56.3% had 1 to 5 years of job practice.

Measures

The following items were measured with the help of Likert scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1. **Managerial.** It was measured with 11 items, which is developed by Park's (2007). The sample item is: "To improve workplace performance, my manager constantly provides feedback."
2. **Thriving at Work.** Thriving was measured by 10 items, which is developed by Porath et al. (2012). The sample items are "I find myself learning often" and "I feel alive and vital."
3. **Perception of Organizational Politics.** The 15-item scale was used to assess the respondent's views regarding POP Scale by Kacmar and Carlson's (1997). An example item is ''Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political."

Common Method Variance

In this study, self-reporting measures were used, so, common method variance checked through Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). There is not an issue of common method variance, because single-factor showed only 23% of the total variance, which is below the standard limit of Harman's test. According to this test, common bias may occur, when one factor describes more than 50% of the change in the items (Mattila & Enz, 2002). Further, Confirmatory factor analysis was run for checking the validity of the scales and measurement.

Measurement Model

The measurement model has been checked with the help of fit indices, the values have shown a good fit ($\chi2$ = 1223.571, df = 585, $\chi2$/df = 2.091, RMSEA= 0.06, CFI=0.93, NNFI=0.95), as these values are indicated better advised cut-off ($\chi2$/df< 3, RMSEA<0.08, CFI>0.95, NNFI>0.95)

(Hu & Bentler, 1999; Browne, Cudeck, Bollen, & Long, 1993; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). 0.90 value of CFI and NNFI also acceptable as advised by Cheung and Rensvold (2002).

Table 1. Results of Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

Factor	**Composite Reliability CR > 0.7**	**Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.5**	**Square root AVE**
Managerial Coaching	0.85	0.57	0.75
Thriving at Work	0.80	0.62	0.79
POP	0.84	0.54	0.73

The data is reliable for further analysis because Cronbach's Alpha values of all variables exceed (> 0.70, Kline, 2005). The construct validity assessed through convergent and discriminant validity. This study provides initial validation because, the values of AVE are higher than 0.5 (AVE ≥ 0.5) table 1, and Cronbach alpha values exceed from 0.70, so the convergent validity has been assessed (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black, 1995; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. Results of Discriminant Validity

Means	**Standard Deviations**	Variables	1	2	4
3.7261	0.53990	1.Managerial Coaching	**0.75**		
3.7682	0.36902	2.Thriving at Work	0.287**	**0.79**	
3.7027	0.49384	5.POP	-.332**	-.508**	**0.73**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

In table 2, discriminant validity has been checked through Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the values of the square root of AVE has shown higher than the correlation values of variables. The above table represents the means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations. Table 2 described that, managerial coaching was positively correlated with thriving at work (r =0. 287, p <.01) and POP (r = -0.332, p <.01). Moreover, POP was negatively correlated with thriving at work (r = 0.508, p <. 01). These results are consistent with hypotheses and provide initial support for the hypotheses. Correlation coefficients were lower (<0.70; so multicollinearity is not issued in the study. Further, Regression technique was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients to Predict Thriving at Work (Dependent Variable) through Managerial Coaching:

Model Variables	**Unstandardized coefficients**	**Standardized coefficient**		**T**	**Sig.**	**Adj. R2**	**F**	**Sig. F**
	B	Std. Error	B			0.079	23.195	0.000
Constant	3.038	0.153		19.83	0.000			
Managerial Coaching	0.196	0.041	0.287	4.816	0.000			
Dependent Variable: Thriving at Work								

Table 4. Regression Coefficients to Predict Thriving at Work through POP (Moderating Variable) and Managerial Coaching:

Model Variables	**Unstandardized coefficients**	**Standardized coefficient**		**T**	**Sig.**	**Adj. R2**	**F**	**Sig. F**
	B	Std. Error	B			0.277	34.205	0.000
Constant	4.498	1.154		3.898	0.000			
Managerial Coaching	-0.524	0.301	-0.767	-2.742	0.000			
POP	-0.288	0.311	-0.386	-2.928	0.000			
Interaction	0.165	0.080	1.432	2.061	0.000			
Dependent Variable: Thriving at Work								

According to hypothesis 1, managerial coaching is positively associated with thriving at work. In table 3, regression model denotes, there is a significant impact of managerial coaching on thriving at work with (β value (c`) = 0.287, t=4. 816 >2, F=23. 195>5 & sig=0. 000). It demonstrates that one-unit change in managerial coaching brings 0.287-unit change in thriving at work. So, support for the first hypothesis, that is, **H1-** managerial coaching is positively related to thriving at work. Employees who are working in such environment, where manager act as a coach, give quick feedback, the employee will feel thrive in their work setting.

Hypothesis 2 propose that POP moderates the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work. According to the second regression model, the interaction between managerial coaching and POP is positively related to thriving at work, (table 4) (β value (c`) = 1.432, t=2. 061 >2, F=34. 205>5 & sig=0. 040). Thus, support the second hypothesis that is **H2**-POP moderates the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work. When POP is persistent in the organizational environment, then employees feel the threat and lose the trust, which decreases thriving at the workplace.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This current study is focused on the relationships of managerial coaching and employee thriving at work with the moderating effect of POP by employees using the 261 samples from full-time workers of the pharmaceutical sector. This study tested the hypothesis, which were developed on the basis of the social exchange theory. The results of correlation and regression revealed that the empirical data supported the hypothesis. The analysis showed the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work is in line with findings of previous researchers (Liang, & Wang, 2016). The study found positive relationships of management support for HRD and perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, which is further moderated by managerial coaching behavior (Raza, Moueed, & Ali, 2015). POP had a moderating effect on the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work. The moderating role of POP between managerial coaching and employees thriving at work is also consistent with the findings (Butt et al., 2013).

Managerial coaching is found to be positively related to employee thriving at work. When a manager acts as a coach, it is considered goodwill of the manager by subordinates. Mushtaq, Abid, Sarwar and Ahmed (2017), found that when employees perceive support from their organization and supervisor, then they feel thriving at work. Raza, Ali, Ahmed, and Moueed (2017), found the positive relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work and further when employees feel thriving, then they enhance their performance and OCB. In coaching behavior manager provide rapid reaction for enhancing the performance of employees and gives clear paths of goals by acting as a role model. This also creates learning opportunities on the job and improves the prospects of success and betterment of employees (Kim et al., 2014). Employees who receive coaching from their direct managers, will feel learning and positive feelings and have the vigor and enthusiasm. But POP will change these learning and positive feelings in negative views about manager and organization (Lau, Tong, Lien, Hsu, & Chong, 2017). Which modify the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work. Thus, the study findings show that POP moderate or weaken the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are some limitations to this research which can become the prospects for future investigation. Firstly, in this study the data is collected only from pharmaceutical organizations situated in Lahore, Pakistan; therefore, the results cannot be utilized by other organizations. Secondly, this study was conducted the eastern culture, and the findings of same research in other culture could be different. Further, to avoid common method variance, longitudinal design can be used in future investigations. Future studies can employ in other industries to generalize the findings and also investigate gender roles in workplace in the same context. Moreover, in future research can also be conducted to explore other possible mediators or moderators to further understand the relationship between managerial coaching and thriving at work.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The effective managerial coaching is vital for the thriving at work of the employees and POP makes this relationship weaker. A good manager should have the following abilities like active listening skills, rational, intellectual, quick response ability, original thoughts, numerous viewpoints in decision making, reasoning, open communication, clarification of goals and tactics and forming a helpful atmosphere (Cox et al., 2010). Thus, the managers who want to increase employee's thriving at work should provide opinion on employee's performance, give clear tracks of goals and objectives, create learning prospect on the job and improve the visions of success and betterment of the employees When subordinates perceive proper supervision under coaching relationship with supervisor, they feel the responsibility to react by improving the satisfactory attitudes and thriving at work (Sonenshein et al., 2013). Thus, the negative effects of POP can be minimized by quick feedback, training, mentoring and effective managerial coaching.

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