

# Managerial Coaching Behaviours and Their Relations to Job Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction and Orientations to Happiness

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## Abstract

This paper aims to explore managerial coaching behaviours and their relations to job satisfaction, life satisfaction and orientations to happiness. Chinese Managerial Coaching Behaviours Inventory, Chinese translation of the Orientations to Happiness Scale, General Job Satisfaction Scale and General Life Satisfaction Scale were administered to 145 managers from two factories, one hospital, China Mobile and China Telecom. Results indicate that: Unexpectedly, managerial coaching behaviours are not associated with job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Pleasure of life in Orientations to Happiness is significantly associated with assessing and challenging dimensions of Managerial Coaching Behaviours Inventory. Both job satisfaction and life satisfaction are significantly positively related with all the three dimensions in Orientations to Happiness. Females show more supporting behaviours than males. Compared with the first-line managers and technicians with titles, the middle and senior managers show more challenging and supporting behaviours. Compared with the factory managers, managers in hospitals, China Mobile and China Telecom show more challenging and supporting behaviours. Pleasure of life was positively related to assessing and challenging behaviours.

## Keywords

Managerial Coaching Behaviours, Job Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, Orientations to Happiness, Relations, China

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## 1. Introduction

Coaching has been recognized as an essential success factor in fostering innovation and managerial flexibility

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(Jones *et al.*, 2006) [1]. According to Ennis *et al.* (2004) [2] coaching is provided by the organization and involves a clear link between the individual goals of the coachee and the strategic goals of the organization. Richard (1994) [3] defined coaching as a skill concerned with creating conditions for people to perform their abilities best. He pointed out that coaching managers' key means in promoting organizational performance is to help staff to learn, grow and develop.

Literature indicates that coaching is critical to the success of managers themselves and their employees (Goodstone & Diamante, 1998; Hudson, 1999; Longenecker, 2010) [4]-[6]. Therefore, managerial coaching will be the focus of this paper. Managerial coaching is defined as "a manager acting as a coach to help his or her staff learn and develop" (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Beattie, 2002; Talarico, 2002) [7]-[9].

Although researches on coaching or managerial coaching in particular are growing, literature on coaching is overly theoretical and prescriptive. There are few empirical studies on coaching behaviours and little empirical evidence on the effects of coaching (Graham *et al.*, 1993, 1994; Beattie, 2002; Janka, 2008) [8] [10]-[12]. In recent years, scholars have begun to conduct empirical studies to examine managerial coaching behaviours. Empirical researches on managerial coaching have examined effective and ineffective managerial coaching behaviours and skills (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Beattie, 2002; Andrea, 2008; Clinton, 2010) [7] [13] [14] and the application of managerial coaching in specific context or organization (Andrea *et al.*, 1999; Alexander *et al.*, 2005) [14] [15].

Andrea (2008) [14] conducted a cross-national study on behavioural indicators of ineffective managerial coaching. She analyzed 17 ineffective behaviours and figured out predominant ineffective behaviours. More attention has been given to empirical studies on effective managerial coaching behaviours. Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) [7] classified 13 managerial coaching behaviours into 2 categories, namely, facilitating and empowering. Beattie's (2002) [7] research on effective managerial coaching in the context of a social service organization explored 22 irrelevant effective facilitative behaviours that falls into 9 behavioural categories: thinking, informing, empowering, assessing, advising, being professional, caring, developing others and challenging employees to stretch themselves.

Alexander *et al.* (2005) [15] examined the association between warehouse worker development and managerial coaching in the logistics industry. They indicated that there was a significant positive association between supervisory coaching behaviour, warehouse workers' job satisfaction and supervisors' perceptions of their subordinates' job-related performance although warehouse workers are at low levels of supervisory coaching behaviour.

Noer (2005, 2007) [16] [17] established a triangle coaching model with equally important dimensions, namely, assessing, challenging, and supporting. The triangle model borrowed ideas from client-centered research stream of the Center for Creative Leadership (McCauley *et al.*, 1998) [18] and the three dimensional interventionist theory (Argyris, 1973) [19]. He also established behavioural components which are congruent with core criteria for each dimension. Supporting dimension indicates "the creation of an interpersonal context which can facilitate trust, openness, respect and understanding". It involves four components: attending, inquiring, reflecting and affirming, respectively. Challenging dimension means "stimulating the person being coached to confront obstacles, reconceptualize issues, and move forward with renewed energy and self-reliance". The four behavioural components are confronting, focusing/shaping, reframing and empowering/energizing. Assessing dimension involves "analytical processes that lead to measurement and goal setting". The four behavioural components are data gathering, gap analysis, goal setting and measurement/feedback.

The Coaching Behaviours Inventory was developed on the basis of the triangle coaching model (Noer, 2005) [16]. In the scope of Coaching Behaviours Inventory, thirty items are selected from more than fifty alternative ones, ten for each dimension. Pilot studies were made and the model was applied to compare managerial coaching behaviours between Saudi Arabian and American managers (Noer, 2005, 2007) [16] [17]. Programs and researches carried out in the past have indicated the high internal consistency of dimensional scales within and between cultural sub-groups. Chen, Huang & Tang developed Chinese Managerial Coaching Behaviour Inventory with 46 items, including three subscales (Assessing, Challenging and Supporting). They also proved the high internal consistency of each subscale of the Inventory. Therefore, it is reasonable to apply this scale into the research into managerial coaching behaviours and their relations to job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and orientations to happiness in the Chinese context.

Job satisfaction has been a heated discussed topic among managers. Vroom (1964) [7] regarded it as "the positive orientation of an individual towards the work role which he is presently occupying". In recent decades, do-

zens of studies have been conducted on relationships between job satisfaction and different variables. Debates on causal relationships of satisfaction and performance lasted for a long time (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Vroom, 1964; Lawler & Porter, 1967; Schwab & Cummings, 1970; Organ, 1977) [20]-[24], but no agreement had been reached on this issue by mid-1980s (Petty *et al.*, 1984) [25]. Petty *et al.* (1984) [25] indicated that strength of relationships between performance and satisfaction varied at different job levels with stronger relationships among higher levels employees. Crossman and Nestle (2003) [26] conducted a study on relationships between job satisfaction and job performance in Lebanese commercial banking sector. The results showed no significant relationship between the two variables. Studies have also been conducted on relationships between job satisfaction and demographic factors such as age (Gibson & Kelein, 1970; Lee & Wilbur, 1985; Kong *et al.*, 1993; Clark *et al.*, 1996) [27]-[30] and gender (Murray & Atkinson, 1981; Witt & Nye, 1992; Chui, 1998; Crossman & Nestle, 2003) [26] [31]-[33]. Lots of studies of psychological and genetic influences on job satisfaction can also be found (Staw & Ross, 1985; Arvey *et al.*, 1989; House *et al.*, 1996; Abraham, 1998; Pelled & Xin, 1999) [34]-[38].

Although the causal relationships of various variables and job satisfaction are controversial, previous studies have provided a great number of factors which are believed to have association with job satisfaction. In addition to the factors mentioned above, Droussiotis (2007) [39] indicated that self-fulfillment, independence, and job environment influence managers' job satisfaction. According to his study, high job satisfaction attributes to factors such as good pay and benefits, highly-skilled subordinates, opportunities for personal growth and advancement in the company, company policies that allow for self-fulfillment and independence, and good work environment. Verhofstadt *et al.* (2007) [40] revealed the association between education background and job satisfaction. They pointed out that higher educated people enjoyed higher job satisfaction than those with lower education if jobs met their expectations. But the level of job satisfaction drops if their jobs can not meet their expectations. McCausland *et al.* (2005) [41] found that performance-related pay had a positive effect on the mean job satisfaction of high-paid workers but negative for low-paid ones. Goris (2007) [11] found that communication satisfaction was a predictor of job satisfaction. The influence of communication satisfaction on job satisfaction is significant. Kavanaugh *et al.* (2006) [42] suggested that professional experience was the major demographic variable which was significantly associated with healthcare professionals' job satisfaction. Oshagbemi (2003) [43] found that the rank of an individual was positively and strongly correlated with the overall job satisfaction while the length of service is negatively related among UK's university teachers. Previous studies also indicated the association between life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Hart (1999) [44] once pointed out that job satisfaction contributed to overall life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is a concept which is equivalent in meaning with subjective well-being (Judge, 1998) [45]. Subjective well-being is an area with three hallmarks (Diener, 2009) [46]. First, it is an indispensable part of individual's experience (Campbell, 1976) [47]. Second, it includes positive measures of mental health. Third, subjective well-being measures include an integrated assessment of a person's life (Diener, 2009) [46].

Several subjective well-being measures have been developed in western context in recent decades. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was developed by Diener *et al.* (1985) [48]. Watson *et al.* (1988) [49] proposed the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). In recent years, Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot *et al.*, 1998) [50], Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle *et al.* 1995; Hills & Argyle 1998) [51] [52], and the Orientations to Happiness Scale (Peterson *et al.*, 2005) [53] have been developed in order to explain how and why people experience their lives in positive ways, including both cognitive judgments and affective reactions (Diener, 2009) [46].

Happiness is one of the subjective well-being measures (Veenhoven, 1994) [54]. Various perspectives on well-being have aroused interest in studying different paths to happiness. Among all these studies, Orientations to Happiness Scale developed by Peterson and his collaborators is widely known. They identified three ways to be happy, namely, pleasure, engagement, and meaning. They examined the association between three orientations to happiness and life satisfaction with a sample of 845 participants. They found that the three orientations to happiness individually predicted life satisfaction. Eighteen items were applied in the assessment. Peterson *et al.* (2005) [53] concluded that participants who had high score on pleasure, engagement and meaning enjoy high life satisfaction.

With the publication of Orientations to Happiness Scale developed by Peterson *et al.*, several studies have been conducted on the basis of the scale afterwards. Chen (2010) [55] examined the reliability and validity of the Orientation to Happiness Scale with a sample of 671 Chinese correspondents. The results generally sup-

ported the validity and usefulness of the Orientation to Happiness Scale. Cross-cultural research was also made with the application of the scale (Ruch *et al.*, 2007) [56]. Park *et al.* (2009) [46] investigated adults from 27 different nations to examine the relationship between orientations to happiness and life satisfaction. The results are quite similar with those of Peterson *et al.* (2009) [57]. The association between engagement and meaning with life satisfaction is higher than the association between pleasure and life satisfaction. The study also validates that three orientations to happiness can predict life satisfaction.

Although research on job satisfaction and its relation to orientations to happiness is difficult to find, it is still reasonable to predict that the two variables have association on the basis of the research findings on the association between orientations to happiness and life satisfaction.

The aim of the present research is to find out managerial coaching behaviours and their relations to job satisfaction, life satisfaction and orientations to happiness. Relations between job satisfaction and orientations to happiness will also be studied. Moreover, according to Watkins and Leign (2010) [58], coaching has been associated with producing long-lasting learning, contributing to higher levels of motivation, improving employee performance, enhancing working relationship, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Literature also indicates that variables, for instance, gender differences (Millard, 1996) [59], psychosocial behaviour (Smith *et al.*, 1979; Black & Weiss, 1992) [60] [61], the numbers of people coached (Sussman & Finnegan, 1998) [62] are related with coaching. Moreover, Ellinger and Keller's (2003) [63] study revealed that supervisory coaching behaviour is positively associated with employees' job satisfaction and performance. According to previous research findings, it is reasonable to find out that, to some degree, variables that are related with coaching overlap with those which are related with job satisfaction. As stated before, job satisfaction is one of the variables which regarded to have association with coaching and it is also associated with orientations to happiness. Therefore, the research on managerial coaching behaviours and their relations to job satisfaction and orientations to happiness is feasible. It is hypothesized here that job satisfaction, life satisfaction and orientations to happiness can predict managerial coaching behaviours or vice versa.

Four hypotheses are raised in this paper as follows:

H1: Managerial coaching behaviours (assessing, supporting, and challenging) is positively correlated with job satisfaction.

H2: Managerial coaching behaviours (assessing, supporting, and challenging) is positively correlated with life satisfaction.

H3: Managerial coaching behaviours (assessing, supporting, and challenging) is positively correlated with orientations to happiness (pleasure, meaning and engagement).

H4: Job satisfaction is positively correlated with orientations to happiness (pleasure, meaning and engagement).

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants and Procedure

Research participants are 145 managers including 78 males and 67 females from three sectors in Pearl River Delta in P. R. China. Among the participants, 55 are managers from a hospital; 56 are managers from one shoe factory and one printing factory; and 34 are managers from China Mobile and China Telecom. In terms of their titles, 62 are line managers; 45 are middle and senior managers; and 38 are technicians with titles. The mean age of the participants is 33.1 years old ( $SD = 7.6$ ).

In the hospital and factories, questionnaires were respectively handed out by the units directly to managers to fulfill within one week. In China Mobile and China Telecom, questionnaires were sent to managers by emails with the help of the human resource department of China Mobile and China Telecom. Questionnaires were fulfilled within two weeks. Finally, 150 of 170 questionnaires were got back with response rate of 88.2%. Among them, 145 questionnaires are valid.

### 2.2. Measures

- *Demographic Description*

Personal information, including gender, age, and level of job position, was collected to analyze their relations with managerial coaching behaviours.

- *Chinese Managerial Coaching Behaviour Inventory*

It was used to measure the coaching behaviours of managers in enterprises or technicians with apprentices. The scale consists of 46 items ((Chen, Huang & Tang, 2013) [64]. There are three sub-scales (assessing, challenging and supporting) within the Chinese Managerial Coaching Behaviours Inventory. Assessing scale consists of 11 items. A sample item is “I often collect comments on my subordinates from other staff.” Challenging scale consists of 15 items. A sample item is “I often discuss with my subordinates about his or her misgivings and misconcepts in order to help him or her break through his or her self-handicapping.” Supporting scale consists of 20 items. A sample item is “I talk with my subordinates with open body language, gentle and soft tone and natural eye contact.” Chinese Managerial Coaching Behaviours Inventory is designed by adopting 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 which, in sequence, indicate “I almost never adopt this behaviour”, “I seldom adopt this behaviour”, “I adopt this behaviour sometimes”, “I often adopt this behaviour”, “I always adopt this behaviour”. In this study, Cronbach’s alphas for subscales, namely, Assessing, Challenging and Supporting are respectively 0.87, 0.91 and 0.92 (N = 196) which are high.

- *Chinese Translation of Orientations to Happiness Scale*

The validity of Chinese Translation of the Orientations to Happiness Scale in Chinese context was proved by Chen (2010) [55]. There are 17 items in the Chinese Translation of Orientations to Happiness Scale with 6 in “pleasure” subscale and “meaning” subscale and 5 in “engagement” subscale. The Chinese Translation of Orientations to Happiness Scale is applied into the present study. 17 items fall into three dimensions, namely, Pleasure, Meaning and Engagement. The scale adopts 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with “5 = very much like me”, “4 = basically like me”, “3 = somewhat like me”, “2 = only a little like me” and “1 = completely unlike me”. Cronbach’s alphas for three dimensions, namely, Pleasure, Meaning and Engagement are 0.74, 0.77 and 0.66 (N = 671; Chen, 2010) [55].

- *General Job Satisfaction Scale*

General Job Satisfaction Scale is a one-item scale with purpose of testing the degree of participants’ job satisfaction in general. It adopts 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = very unsatisfied” to “5 = very satisfied”.

- *General Life Satisfaction Scale*

General Life Satisfaction Scale is a one-item scale. It is applied to measure general life satisfaction. Participants are asked to rate their satisfaction of their lives in general. It adopts 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = very unsatisfied” to “5 = very satisfied”. The usefulness of one-item General Life Satisfaction Scale is supported in previous studies (e.g., Chen, 2010) [55].

## 2.3. Data Analysis

Firstly, the single factor analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA) was used to analyze descriptive characteristics, namely, differences of managerial coaching behaviours of managers in different levels and different organizations. Secondly, correlation analysis was adopted to report correlation coefficient of variables and Cronbach’s alphas of measures which were used in this study.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Difference Analysis of Descriptive Characteristics

Besides the significant higher score of female managers in supporting dimension of managerial coaching behaviours (Male:  $M = 67.25$ ,  $SD = 13.95$ ; Female:  $M = 72.16$ ,  $SD = 12.07$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), there is no difference in other variables in regard with gender.

According to the single factor analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA), scores of middle and senior managers in challenging and supporting dimensions of managerial coaching behaviours are higher than those of first-line managers and technicians with titles. There is no significant difference between middle and senior managers and first-line managers and technicians with titles in assessing and other variables. The results are presented in **Table 1**.

According to the single factor analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA), scores of different organizations in challenging and supporting dimensions of managerial coaching behaviours are different. Managers in hospital and China Mobile and Telecom reported significant higher scores in challenging and supporting than did those

in factories. There is no significant difference among different organizations in assessing. The results are presented in **Table 2**.

### 3.2. Correlation Analysis

Correlation coefficients of variables (including age) and Cronbach's alphas of measures used in this study are shown in **Table 3**. According to correlation analysis, as shown in **Table 3**, there is a significant positive correlation between age and job satisfaction, life satisfaction, pleasure, challenging and supporting. Job satisfaction is significantly positively related with pleasure, meaning and engagement. Life satisfaction is significantly positively related with meaning, engagement and assessing. Pleasure of life in the Orientations to Happiness Scale is significantly positively associated with assessing and challenging of managerial coaching behaviours.

## 4. Discussion

Managerial coaching behaviours are not associated with job satisfaction and life satisfaction, which is different from previous studies. Hypothesis 1 and 2 was not confirmed. The reason for this can attribute to the fact that the Chinese Managerial Coaching Behaviour Inventory used in this study is different from the scales which were used by other scholars in previous studies. For instance, Alexander *et al.* (2005) [2] adopted an exploratory

**Table 1.** Differences of managerial coaching behaviours of managers in different levels.

Managerial Levels Dimensions	Technicians with Titles	First-Line Managers	Middle and Senior Managers	F	P
	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD		
Assessing	35.81 ± 9.14	37.53 ± 6.11	38.3 ± 5.07	1.19	>0.05
Challenging	50.83 ± 12.4	54.06 ± 8.33	57.95 ± 6.58	5.16	<0.01
Supporting	66.13 ± 16.71	71.98 ± 11.87	72.89 ± 8.2	3.25	<0.05

**Table 2.** Differences of managerial coaching behaviours in different organizations.

Organizations Dimensions	Factories	Hospitals	China Mobile and China Telecom	F	P
	M ± SD	M ± SD	M ± SD		
Assessing	35.29 ± 9.11	37.29 ± 6.54	38.32 ± 4.96	1.98	>0.05
Challenging	51.1 ± 12.9	53.11 ± 8.55	58.68 ± 5.01	6.3	<0.01
Supporting	63.83 ± 17.79	72.67 ± 9.72	71.71 ± 9.7	6.81	<0.01

**Table 3.** Correlation coefficient and cronbach's  $\alpha$ .

Measures	Age	Job Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction	Pleasure	Meaning	Engagement	Assessing	Challenging	Supporting
Job Satisfaction	0.31***	1							
Life Satisfaction	0.20*	0.72***	1						
Pleasure	0.20*	0.30***	0.38***	0.67					
Meaning	0.01	0.34***	0.38***	0.50***	0.72				
Engagement	0.15	0.44***	0.47***	0.59***	0.59***	0.71			
Assessing	0.14	-0.04	0.02	0.22*	0.08	0.01	0.88		
Challenging	0.23**	-0.09	-0.02	0.25**	0.08	0.04	0.87***	0.93	
Supporting	0.28**	-0.16	-0.08	0.12	0.10	-0.05	0.82***	0.85***	0.94

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

eight-item measure for managerial coaching behaviour on the basis of Ellinger and Bostrom's (1999) [20] behavioural themes.

Hypothesis 3 is partly confirmed. It suggests that assessing and challenging behaviours can lead to pleasure of life such as the aesthetic sense in the process of intellectual stimulation.

Hypothesis 4 is well confirmed. This result indicates that orientations to happiness can be increased with the increase of job satisfaction. Due to the fact that managerial coaching behaviours are not associated with job satisfaction, other variables which can increase job satisfaction are needed to be found in future research in order to find out a feasible way to increase orientations to happiness. Life satisfaction is significantly positively correlated with two dimensions in Orientations to Happiness, which confirmed previous findings (Peterson *et al.*, 2005; Chen, 2010) [11] [49].

Managers in higher level of job positions perform more challenging and supporting behaviours. This result can be explained as follows. Managers in higher positions have higher social status and enjoy higher quality of lives. This result of this study is consistent with previous studies (Oshagbemi, 2003; Verhofstadt *et al.*, 2007; Chen, Huang & Tang, 2013) [40] [43] [64].

There is a significant positive correlation between age and job satisfaction. It indicates that job satisfaction is higher with the increase of age. The result of this study is consistent with the previous surveys (Chen, 2010) [11]. This study fills the gap of previous studies and made a further step (Chen, Huang, & Tang, 2013) [64]. It suggests that managers perform more challenging and supporting behaviours with the increase of age. The reasons for the increase of job satisfaction, pleasure of life and challenging and supporting managerial behaviours can be illustrated as follows: with the increase of age, people become more experienced and have more authority in Chinese culture. Therefore, they tend to have more power and work in higher job positions.

## 5. Conclusions

All in all, in this research we found that there is a significant difference between managerial coaching behaviours of managers in factories such as shoe factories and printing factories and those in hospitals, China Mobile and China Telecom. The results indicate that there are fewer challenging and supporting behaviours of managers in factories than those in hospitals, China Mobile and China Telecom. The reasons for this can be as follows. Managers in factories are responsible for operation management which is a routine management with little demand of creativity. They manage people with low-level education. Managers in hospitals, China Mobile and China Telecom are responsible for creative jobs or tasks. They manage people with better education and those people are required to meet more standards in managerial coaching behaviours.

Scores of middle and senior managers in challenging and supporting dimensions are higher than first-line managers and technical staffs with titles. On One hand, job satisfaction is significantly positively related with three dimensions in Orientations to Happiness. On the other hand Managerial coaching behaviours can not be improved through the increase of job satisfaction and life satisfaction of managers. Also, improvement of managerial coaching behaviours is not helpful to the increase of managers' job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Further, there is a significant positive correlation between age and pleasure. It indicates that the increase of age leads to increase of pleasure of life. There is a significant correlation between age and challenging and supporting managerial coaching behaviours. And the Pleasure of life in the Orientations to Happiness Scale is significantly associated with assessing and challenging dimensions of Managerial Coaching Behaviours Inventory.

## 6. Limitations and Implications

There are several limitations of this study. Firstly, the sample size is not large enough. In future research, the size of sample can be enlarged. Also, managerial coaching behaviours in more various industries can be compared in future research. Secondly, there is only one item in General Job Satisfaction Scale and General life Satisfaction Scale, scales with more items can be used to assess job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Finally, this study discusses managerial coaching behaviours and their relations with job satisfaction, life satisfaction and orientations to happiness in Chinese context.

Managerial coaching behaviours and their relations to other variables can be studied in the future in order to find out the most influential factors to managerial coaching behaviours in Chinese context. In future research, the relation between managers' coaching behaviours and their subordinates' job satisfaction can be also studied.

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