



How Does Managerial Coaching Affect Talent Development? The Mediating Role of Subordinates' Learning Motivation

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of immediate superiors on talent development through the mediating role of subordinates' learning motivation. This study collected data from 279 immediate superiors and their subordinates at government service agencies in Malaysia. Bootstrapping analysis using SmartPLS was employed to test the hypotheses. The hypotheses testing indicates that immediate superiors are positively related to talent development. In addition, the study's findings also reveal that subordinates' learning motivation mediates the relationship between immediate superiors and talent development. This study contributes to a better understanding of how immediate superiors influence talent development with subordinates' learning motivation as a mediator. Next, the study deepens the understanding of the boundary condition of the associations between immediate superiors, subordinates' learning motivation, and talent development in the context of government service agencies in Malaysia.

Keywords: Immediate superiors, subordinates' learning motivation, talent development.

INTRODUCTION

The result of dynamic changes and the rapid use of digital technology in the environment inspires leadership to change the role of human resource management gradually, that is, from financial performance to improving the quality of internal human resources (Kuan & Abu Bakar, 2023; Ismail et al., 2023; Muduli & Choudhury, 2024; Nicolás-Agustín et al., 2024). This transformation has encouraged human resource managers to work closely with immediate supervisors to plan, control, and monitor the work environment's adverse effects and undesirable aspects (Enhart, Matthews & Muller-Camen, 2020; Faisal, 2023; Kramar, 2022). Several studies have identified categories and taxonomies of managerial coaching, often referred to as the guidance of subordinates (Kraut et al., 1989; Per Echeverri, 2020; Zhao & Liu, 2020), training (Borman & Brush, 1993), training-coaching (Yukl, 1981), training effectiveness (Emti, 2024), leader's coaching behaviour (Liu & Xiang, 2020, Mohamad et al., 2024), managerial coaching skill (Nyfoudi et al., 2022), subordinates' workplace well-being (Zhao & Liu, 2020), provide growth and development (Morse & Wagner, 1978), mentoring and development (Quinn, 1988; Yukl, 1981). These components are valued as essential elements that activate the managerial role or are seen as a subset of the leader's role (Mintzberg, 1973) related to managerial coaching. The process of managerial coaching involves immediate superiors motivating subordinates to learn on their own, creating new knowledge, and transforming personal experiences to help them reach their objectives by increasing their exposure to and awareness of new opportunities (Ismail et al., 2023; Roša & Lace, 2021, Mohamad, 2024). It is primarily utilised in management development, leadership, and human resources as important instrument for creating leaders, enhancing performance (Nyfoudi et al., 2022, Mohamad et al., 2024), cultivating a culture of ongoing learning and growth (Liu & Xiang, 2020). According to a recent literature assessment on leadership, behaviour has two crucial components in managerial coaching: open communication and encouraging growth (Ellinger et al., 1999; Atkinson et al., 2022; Ismail et al., 2023). From a coaching perspective, open communication is a coaching style that can satisfy the needs of subordinates when immediate superiors are prepared to listen empathetically, consider fresh viewpoints, expand on subordinates' desires, create desired goals, and build mutual understanding (Kluger & Itzhakov, 2022; Passarelli et al., 2023). This aspect also fosters curiosity, the capacity for mutual trust, the ability to make favourable

assumptions, and the introduction of new ideas and resources to provide subordinates with a fresh perspective from the experience of their immediate superiors (Kluger & Itzchakov, 2022; Passarelli et al., 2023, Mohamad et al., 2024); for instance, working with a direct superior whose professional background differs from that of the immediate superior's subordinates. This situation can increase the involvement of subordinates and identify the best talent (Smith, 2019; Deiorio et al., 2022). On the other hand, encouraging growth is often associated with a continuous learning process, enabling employees to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to meet changing customer demands and achieve organisational goals (Deiorio et al., 2022; Atkinson et al., 2022). According to the Self-Determination Theory, leaders cultivate competence by establishing a supportive learning environment and presenting opportunities for individuals to utilise their skills and enhance them through tasks offering optimal challenge levels (Desta & Mulie, 2024). Competencies encompass more than just knowledge and technical skills; they also encompass attitudes and values underlying qualities like willingness to learn, creativity and others (Peiro & Matinez-Tur, 2022). The strategies and development functions played by immediate superiors effectively support the professional growth of subordinates to update their knowledge and skills in a flexible and fast way to remain employed in the future. To succeed in the organisation, subordinates must constantly innovate and grow, with the support of their immediate superiors, to continue their professional development. As an integral part of organisational culture, this aspect can ensure that subordinates stay current on organisational best practices and learn new skills (Roša & Lace, 2021).

Talent management practices depend on the leaders' capabilities to persuade employees to invest their resources and time in new and risky initiatives, manage teamwork, and stimulate creative employee engagement, collaboration, autonomy, and independence (Baharin et al., 2023). A study by Desta and Mulie (2024) indicated that empowering leadership influences employee job performance partially through its impact on work engagement. In other words, empowering leadership affects job performance indirectly by enhancing work engagement. In essence, the greater the implementation of empowering leadership practices, the higher the level of work engagement, ultimately resulting in improved employee performance in the workplace. According to Avestaran et al. (2022), the psychological sense of belonging within an organisation and the empowerment of employees positively influence individual innovative behaviour, as noted by Liu et al. (2019). Moreover, empowerment moderates the relationship between organisational climate and innovation. Surprisingly, recent studies on managerial coaching underscore the significance of fostering open communication and promoting growth, asserting that these factors synergise to yield positive outcomes, particularly concerning talent development and the motivation of subordinates in private and government sectors (Ismail et al., 2023; Nyfoudi et al., 2023; Kim, Park & Yoon, 2023). Within organisational settings, talent development refers to the systematic process of positioning subordinates for career advancement in alignment with the organisation's mission. It entails identifying employees' talents and aspirations, facilitating the acquisition of requisite knowledge and skills to fulfil these aspirations, and meeting the organisation's objectives (Nyfoudi et al., 2023; Kim, Park & Yoon, 2023). Organisations must possess dedicated and motivated human resources to sustain long-term success while remaining receptive to identifying emerging talents among subordinates (Hwang, Kang & Choi, 2023). Typically, talent development entails cultivating a positive attitude, adapting to tasks, comprehending organisational objectives, collaborating effectively with others, embracing novel ideas, demonstrating respect for colleagues, and assuming responsibility. The capacity of employees to remain valuable contributors to the workforce hinges on a nurturing organisational culture prioritising and respecting its employees (Hwang, Kang & Choi, 2023). These components are pivotal in enhancing skill sets, providing enriching experiences, heightening employee awareness and motivation, and fostering behaviours conducive to achieving organisational objectives (Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller, 2003). Additionally, research on managerial coaching underscores talent development as a critical outcome of effective coaching practices.

Furthermore, subordinates' learning motivation is frequently linked with their belief in their capabilities and strong drive to accomplish desired objectives (Law & Choi-Ping Lau, 2020; Hwang, Kang & Choi, 2023). Subordinates exhibiting high motivation for learning in their work typically demonstrate a keen eagerness to manage and execute tasks (Hwang, Kang & Choi, 2023). This motivation typically translates into more effective and appropriate actions, consequently enhancing employee job performance (Desta & Mulie, 2024). For instance, prior research on managerial coaching indicated that subordinates with robust workplace learning motivation tend to establish clear objectives, invest greater effort, exhibit diligence, persist in overcoming task obstacles, strive to complete challenging assignments, endeavour to acquire new skills, and are willing to undertake significant responsibilities within the organisation (Kim, Park & Yoon, 2023). Conversely, subordinates with low motivation for learning at work often display limited enthusiasm in managing and executing organisational tasks. An individual's behavioural response stems from their inner drive or capability to execute a task (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Bandura, 1986). Subordinates lacking workplace motivation typically lack clear objectives and are reluctant to take proactive steps towards becoming successful employees (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). Regular communication has proven effective in mobilising employees and increasing their commitment (Errida & Lotfi, 2021, Mohamad, 2024). Moreover, research on organisational leadership underscores that fostering open communication, promoting growth, and facilitating talent development are crucial to effective managerial coaching.

Although the nature of this relationship is essential, subordinates' learning motivation as an influential mediating variable is often neglected. Many scholars have identified several gaps in research on managerial coaching. First, previous studies have focused on the leadership qualities of coaching styles, including their goals, types, and values in commercial and non-commercial organisations (Wang et al., 2022; Niu et al., 2022, Mohamad, 2024). Second, the direct effect model is used to study the relationship between managerial coaching with subordinates' learning motivation, talent development with subordinates' learning motivation, and subordinates' learning motivation with talent development (Hui, Law, & Lau, 2020; Wang et al., 2022). However, these models only describe the effect of causal variables on criterion variables in model development. Third, the direct effect model only uses simple behavioural statistical analysis, which cannot measure the mediating effect of subordinates' learning motivation in the structural model. Therefore, research paradigms only provide general recommendations, which may not be sufficient for practitioners to understand how employees perceive their ability to handle their work. Due to limitations in empirical studies, researchers now focus on the relationship between managerial coaching, subordinates' learning motivation, and talent development to fill the gap in the literature and help organisations achieve their strategies and goals in a rapidly changing global environment.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Immediate Superior and Talent Development

The correlation between immediate superiors and talent development aligns with Graen and Uhl-Bien's Leader-Member Exchange Theory (1995). According to the Social Exchange Theory, relationships evolve gradually as a leader interacts with each subordinate (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In high-quality exchange relationships, characterised by trust and respect, leaders provide various benefits to subordinates (e.g., support, motivation, goals, challenging tasks, additional responsibilities, increased rewards) in exchange for the subordinate's commitment and loyalty. Conversely, in low-quality exchange relationships, subordinates are only expected to fulfil formal job requirements without additional benefits from the leaders.

Additionally, the Social Cognition Theory (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1991) suggests that managerial coaching can facilitate knowledge development among subordinates. This theory posits that subordinates acquire knowledge through positive stimuli in their environment (Abelson et al., 1982; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Thus, if subordinates gain more knowledge through managerial guidance (motivation, direction, support) provided by their leaders, the potential for social interaction within this environment widens (Zhao & Liu, 2022; Nyfoudi et al., 2022). These theories are often invoked to explain the role of immediate superiors within managerial coaching.

The analysis of the scientific literature shows that empirical studies have found a positive correlation between immediate superiors and talent development. For example, a two-wave longitudinal field study of 114 Hong Kong employees (Hui, Law & Lau, 2020), a systematic literature search to identify primary studies ($k = 20$, $n = 957$) (Wang et al., 2022), 230 Zambian subordinates and their immediate expatriate supervisors working in the Chinese company in Zambia (Niu et al., 2022), 579 survey questionnaires from Malaysian public sector employees (Ismail et al., 2023), and 30 semi-structured interviews collected via Skype, FaceTime or Zoom in public, private, and third sector organisations (Smith, 2019). According to this study, managerial coaching in organisations (e.g., open communication and encouraging growth) is essential in improving talent development. Therefore, based on empirical and theoretical studies supporting this direct relationship, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1a: Open communication is positively associated with talent development.

H1b: Encouraging growth is positively associated with talent development.

Immediate Superiors and Subordinates' Learning Motivation

The relationship between immediate superiors and subordinates' learning motivation aligns with House's (1971) Path-Goal Theory. This theory examines how leadership impacts followers through a reciprocal interaction between leaders and subordinates. It identifies leadership styles such as supportive, motivating, fostering participation, and goal-oriented leadership. Leaders employing these styles can inspire employees to attain organisational objectives. It has been suggested that individuals who view themselves as leaders are more dedicated to enhancing their leadership mindsets and abilities (Sult, Wobst & Lueg, 2023; Szekely et al., 2024). Within the context of managerial coaching, the application of this theory often refers to the immediate superior.

The academic literature on managerial coaching using empirical studies shows a positive correlation between immediate superiors and subordinates' learning motivation. Many previous studies have used different sample sizes to evaluate the effects of this relationship, such as the perception of a two-wave longitudinal field study of 114 Hong Kong employees (Hui, Law & Lau, 2020), 584 paper questionnaires distributed to nearly 50 companies in Chengdu, China (Wang et al., 2022), and 242 fully completed and matched responses (60 managers and 182 team members) (Nyfoudi et al., 2023). According to this study, managerial coaching practised in organisations (e.g., open communication and encouraging growth) is critical in increasing

subordinates' learning motivation. Therefore, based on empirical and theoretical studies supporting this direct relationship, the following hypotheses are proposed in this study:

H2a: Open communication is positively associated with subordinates' learning motivation.

H2b: Encouraging growth is positively associated with subordinates' learning motivation.

Immediate Superiors, Subordinates' Learning Motivation and Talent Development

The mediating effect of subordinates' learning motivation in the relationship between immediate superiors and talent development is consistent with the essence of the Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1986). This theory's fundamental notion covers individual behaviour influenced by learning, emphasising the importance of observing, modelling, imitating the behaviours, attitudes, emotional reactions of others and individuals deemed models. This social learning is influenced by three factors: the environment (closest leaders, other persons, and peers), cognition (language, creativity, and reasoning), and behaviour (joyful, angry, compassionate, firm, patient, and other positive behaviours). This learning process is typically comprised of four major phases: (i) observing a specific behaviour or job activity we want to imitate, (ii) recalling seen behaviour and storing the outcomes of observation in memory, also known as retention, (iii) repeating something based on previous observations, also known as reproduction, which can also be used for future practice and implementation, and (iv) reinforcing and motivating in terms of the reward to strengthen the new behaviour practised (Bandura, 1986). Applying this theory in organisations is often called subordinates' learning motivation.

Some further studies have used an indirect effect model to evaluate the influence of subordinates' learning motivation on the relationship between immediate superiors and talent development. For example, 579 survey questionnaires from Malaysian public sector employees (Ismail et al., 2023), 242 fully completed and matched responses (60 managers and 182 team members) (Nyfoudi et al., 2023) and 20 companies across multiple industries in South Korea, and a total of 386 leader-follower dyads' (Kim, Park & Yoon, 2023). These surveys found that the ability of immediate supervisors to implement the managerial coaching practised in the organisation (e.g., open communication and encouraging growth) will improve subordinates' learning motivation. This situation can further increase talent development in the organisation under study. Thus, based on empirical research and the theory, the formulated hypotheses are as follows:

H3a: Subordinates' learning motivation mediates the relationship between open communication and talent development.

H3b: Subordinates' learning motivation mediates the relationship between encouraging growth and talent development.

RESEARCH MODEL

The theoretical and empirical evidence had been used to formulate a study model, as exhibited in Figure 1.

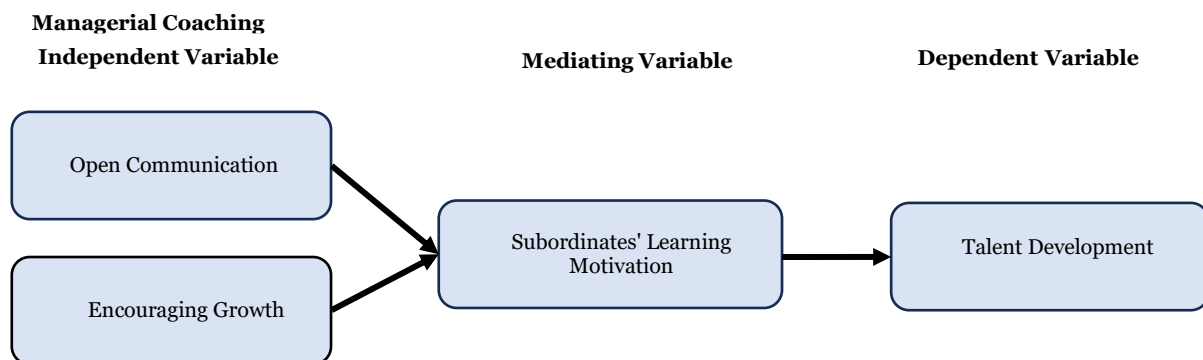


Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional technique in its design, selected for its ability to gather managerial coaching information from various sources such as literature reviews, pilot studies, and surveys. This method offers advantages such as improved accuracy in data collection, reduced bias, and enhanced data quality (Cresswell, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The research was conducted at government service agencies in Malaysia, and the confidentiality policy of the organisation under investigation is respected by withholding its identity. In the study's data collection approach, a draft questionnaire was developed based on an adapted

literature review of managerial coaching. The original version was then compared against the translated form from English to Malay using back-translation procedures (Wright, 1996). The researcher hired a competent translation field expert to translate the questionnaire items into Malay and English so that the questionnaire created would be appropriate for the research organisation under study. This stage is critical for ensuring the respondents understand the true definition of the items utilised, enhancing the research instrument's quality and remaining original content (Brislin, 1970; Lomand, 2016).

Instrument

The questionnaire design contains three main parts: First, open communication and encouraging growth are assessed based on twelve items, respectively, adapted from a literature review related to managerial coaching literature (Park, McLean & Yang, 2008; McLean et al., 2005). Second, subordinates' learning motivation is assessed based on six items adapted from a literature review related to organisational learning (Parker, 1998). Third, talent development is assessed based on five items adapted from a literature review related to talent development (William & Anderson, 1991). These items are measured according to a seven-choice answer scale, ranging from "strongly disagree/very dissatisfied" (1) to "strongly agree/very satisfied" (7). Furthermore, the respondents' demographic characteristics were used as control variables because this study only focused on employee attitudes.

Sampling and Data Collection

This study involved participation from immediate superiors and subordinates within government service agencies in Malaysia. The data collection method consisted of 320 questionnaires distributed to respondents using purposive sampling techniques. This approach was adopted due to the organisation's inability to furnish a comprehensive list of respondents' names and details to safeguard the organisation's reputation and corporate image. Consequently, random sampling could not be employed to select study participants. Of the total questionnaires disseminated, 279 (87.18%) were completed and returned to the researcher. Respondents volunteered to complete the questionnaire without any form of coercion.

The study data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and SmartPLS software. Initially, SPSS was utilised to diagnose the data, identifying missing values, straight-line responses, outliers, and deviations from normal distribution (Hair et al., 2017). Subsequently, the data was formatted into comma-separated values (CSV) files to measure the measurement model, structural model, and hypotheses testing. The study employed the concept of the rule of thumb to determine the sample size, considering the number of formative indicators in the questionnaire. It was stipulated that the number of formative indicators should be at least ten times the sample size, with the items for measurement models having outer loadings exceeding the conventional criterion of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). For instance, the construct of managerial coaching (open communication and encouraging growth) comprised twelve formative indicators, indicating that a minimum sample size of 120 respondents was deemed sufficient for the study.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that most respondents are between 34 and 39 years old (37.6%), married (73.83%), Malay (89.6%), female (63.4%), hold a bachelor's degree (55.9%), positions of grades 41 to 44 (50.2%), and have a length of service between 6 to 10 years (30.5%).

Table 1. Respondents' profiles

Profile	Sub-Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Less than 27 years	31	11.1
	28 to 33 years old	55	19.7
	34 to 39 years old	105	37.6
	40 to 45 years old	58	20.8
	46 years old and above	30	10.8
Status	Single	73	26.2
	Married	206	73.83
Race	Malay	250	89.6
	Chinese	15	5.4
	Indian	12	4.3
	Others	2	0.7
Gender	Male	102	36.6
	Female	177	63.4
Education Background	PMR	1	0.4
	SPM	9	3.2
	STPM	19	6.8
	Bachelor's Degree	156	55.9

	Master's Degree	81	29.0
	PhD	13	4.7
Position Grade	54-56	30	10.75
	48-52	69	24.7
	41-44	140	50.2
	29-40	25	9.0
	19-26	12	4.3
	1-18	3	1.1
Length of Services	Less than 5 years	62	22.2
	6-10 years	85	30.5
	11-15 years	78	28.0
	16 years and above	54	19.4

Table 2 shows that the outer loadings for all the study constructs are greater than 0.708 (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009), and the average variance extracted (AVE) values are greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating that the results meet the convergent validity criteria. Furthermore, the composite reliability values for all study constructs are greater than 0.8 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Table 2. Convergent validity analysis

Constructs	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha
Open Communication		0.905	0.669	0.900
OCN1:	0.847			
OCN2:	0.864			
OCN3:	0.862			
OCN4:	0.843			
OCN5:	0.728			
OCN6:	0.752			
Encouraging Growth		0.935	0.715	0.933
NGD1:	0.743			
NGD2:	0.873			
NGD3:	0.867			
NGD4:	0.882			
NGD5:	0.873			
NGD5:	0.843			
NGD6:	0.829			
Subordinates' Learning Motivation		0.933	0.747	0.932
SLM1:	0.854			
SLM2:	0.854			
SLM3:	0.844			
SLM4:	0.904			
SLM5:	0.853			
SLM6:	0.876			
Talent Development		0.903	0.720	0.902
TDT1:	0.875			
TDT2:	0.888			
TDT3:	0.894			
TDT4:	0.777			
TDT5:	0.800			

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) was used to evaluate all the study constructs, as shown in Table 3. This analysis reveals that all study constructs in direct relationships have values less than 0.85 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating that all constructs meet the discriminant validity criterion.

Table 3. Results of HTMT analysis

Construct/ Relationship	HTMT
Encouraging Growth <-> Open Communication	0.722
Subordinates' Learning_Motivation <-> Open Communication	0.660
Subordinates' Learning_Motivation <-> Encouraging Growth	0.584
Talent Development <-> Open Communication	0.636
Talent Development <-> Encouraging Growth	0.533
Talent Development <-> Subordinates' Learning Motivation	0.718

Table 4 displays variance inflation factor (VIF) values and a descriptive analysis of the constructs. The means for the study constructs fall within the range of 5.784 to 6.090, indicating that participants perceive open communication, encouraging growth, subordinates' learning motivation, and talent development at levels ranging from high (4) to the highest (7). Additionally, the VIF values for the relationships among the study constructs are all below 5.0, suggesting that collinearity issues do not significantly affect the data (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4. VIF and descriptive constructs analysis

Construct	Subordinates' Learning Motivation	Talent Development	Mean	Std. Deviation
Open Communication	1.786	1.786	5.784	0.758
Encouraging Growth	1.786	1.786	5.795	0.782
Subordinates' Learning Motivation			6.090	0.593
Talent Development			5.998	0.624

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is the difference between the observed and model-implied correlation matrices. It allows for assessing the average magnitude of the discrepancies between observed and expected correlations as an absolute measure of model fit. Table 5 shows the model fit analysis results. The SRMR value is 0.087, indicating that the model is a reasonably good fit for a saturated model (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 5. Model fit analysis

Model Fit	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.057	0.087
d_ ULS	0.983	2.248
d_ G	0.633	0.682
Chi-square	977.098	1031.866
NFI	0.834	0.825

Table 6 displays the outcomes of the cross-loading analysis. According to the findings, the indicator values for each construct surpass those of other constructs. It implies that the items in the study have achieved the necessary level of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 6. Cross-loading analysis

Open Communication	Encouraging Growth	Subordinates' Learning Motivation	Talent Development
0.468	0.743	0.444	0.363
0.549	0.873	0.489	0.419
0.548	0.867	0.403	0.367
0.521	0.882	0.462	0.441
0.559	0.873	0.474	0.424
0.625	0.843	0.480	0.429
0.643	0.829	0.473	0.439
0.847	0.568	0.541	0.513
0.864	0.532	0.512	0.497
0.862	0.566	0.492	0.452
0.843	0.586	0.555	0.486
0.728	0.509	0.425	0.441
0.752	0.487	0.435	0.424

0.514	0.513	0.854	0.570
0.541	0.467	0.854	0.568
0.514	0.422	0.844	0.494
0.547	0.524	0.904	0.592
0.519	0.428	0.853	0.584
0.512	0.475	0.876	0.603
0.498	0.400	0.520	0.875
0.518	0.382	0.590	0.888
0.515	0.375	0.555	0.894
0.421	0.447	0.556	0.777
0.479	0.473	0.569	0.800

Table 7 presents the findings from the structural model analysis. The reported results indicate the effect sizes, denoted by f^2 , for various relationships within the model. The relationship between open communication and subordinates' learning motivation yields an f^2 of 0.179, indicating a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Similarly, the relationship between open communication and talent development results in an f^2 of 0.173, indicating a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). The f^2 for the relationship between encouraging growth and subordinates' learning motivation is 0.063, indicating a small effect size.

The f^2 for the relationship between encouraging growth and talent development is 0.032, indicating a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The R^2 values are substantial, with 0.401 for subordinates' learning motivation and 0.346 for talent development.

Table 7. R^2 and f^2 of endogenous constructs

Construct	f^2		R^2
	Subordinates' Learning Motivation	Talent Development	
Open Communication	0.179	0.173	
Encouraging Growth	0.063	0.032	
Subordinates' Learning Motivation			0.401
Talent Development			0.346

In addition to evaluating the magnitude of the R^2 value as a criterion of prediction accuracy, it is also essential to study the Stone-Geisser Q^2 value (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1974) as a criterion of prediction relevance.

The Q^2 value of the latent variable in the PLS path model was obtained using a blindfolding procedure. Table 8 shows the Q^2 values of the endogenous constructs.

The Q^2 value is 0.341, demonstrating acceptable predictive relevance.

Table 8. Q^2 of endogenous constructs

Construct	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Open Communication	1674.000	1674.000	0.000
Encouraging Growth	1953.000	1953.000	0.000
Subordinates' Learning Motivation	1674.000	1177.744	0.296
Talent Development	1395.000	919.072	0.341

The bootstrapping technique (5,000 subsamples, one-tailed significance) was used to estimate the statistical significance of the parameters. The results of the direct effect hypotheses are presented in Table 9.

The analysis revealed four significant findings. First, open communication is associated with talent development (H1a, $\beta = 0.238$; $t=3.332$ $p=0.001$). Second, encouraging growth is associated with talent development (H1b, $\beta = 0.071$; $t=1.134$; $p=0.257$).

Third, open communication is associated with subordinates' learning motivation (H2a, $\beta = 0.436$; $t=6.752$; $p=0.000$). Fourth, encouraging growth is associated with subordinates' learning motivation (H2b, $\beta = 0.258$; $t=3.707$; $p=0.000$). Therefore, H1a, H2a, and H2b are supported, while H1b is not. Next, Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 show the path coefficients for the direct hypotheses.

Table 9. The results of the hypotheses testing of the research model (direct effect)

Relationship	Beta	t-statistics (O/STDEV)	p-values
H1a: Open Communication -> Talent Development	0.238	3.332	0.001
H1b: Encouraging Growth -> Talent Development	0.071	1.134	0.257
H2a: Open Communication -> Subordinates' Learning Motivation	0.436	6.752	0.000
H2b: Encouraging Growth -> Subordinates' Learning Motivation	0.258	3.707	0.000

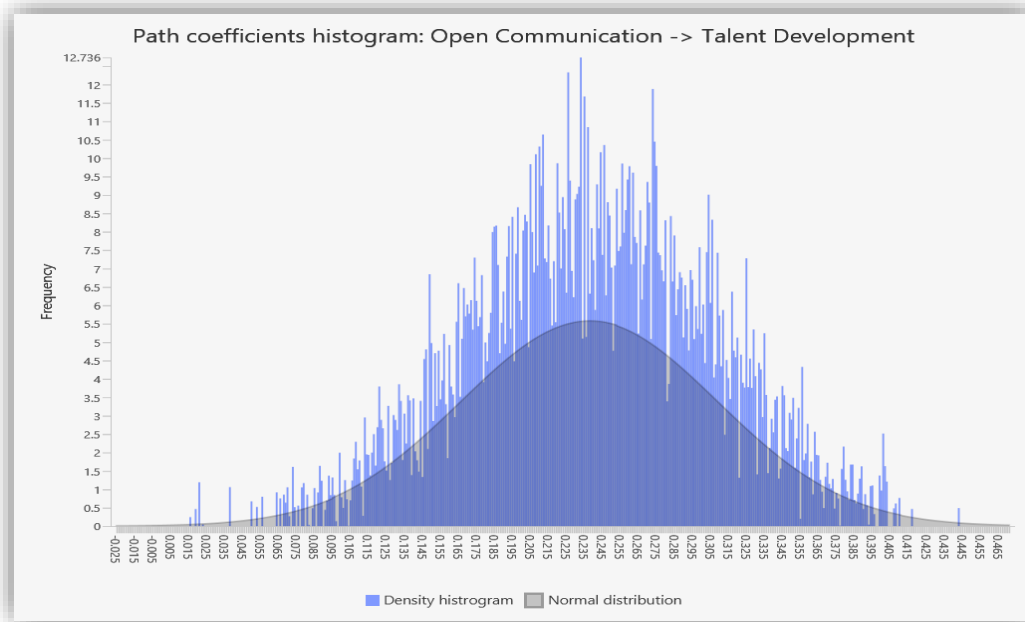


Figure 2: Path Coefficients for H1a

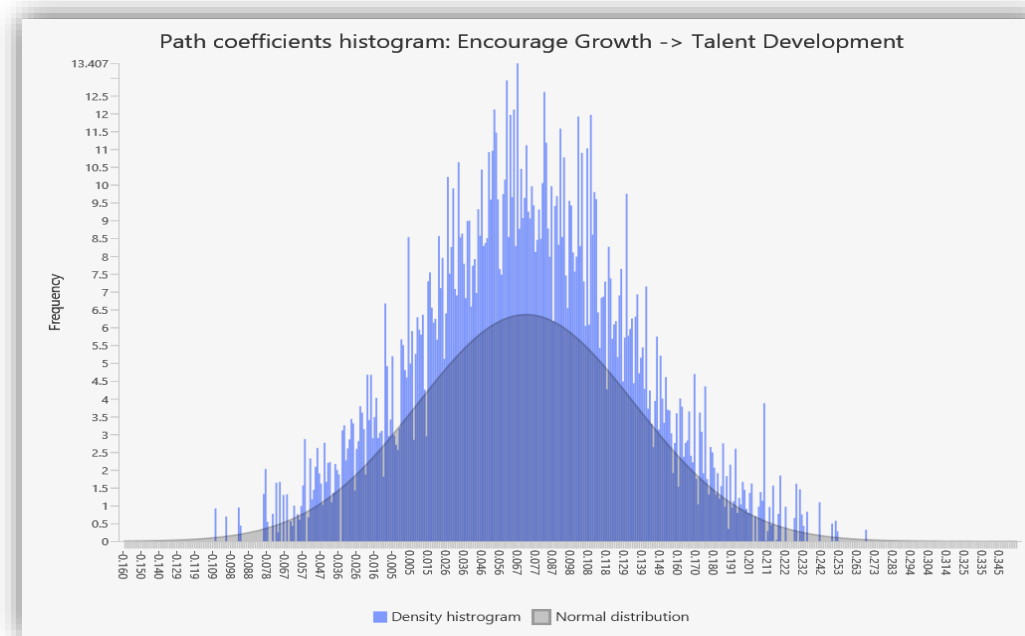


Figure 3: Path Coefficients for H1b

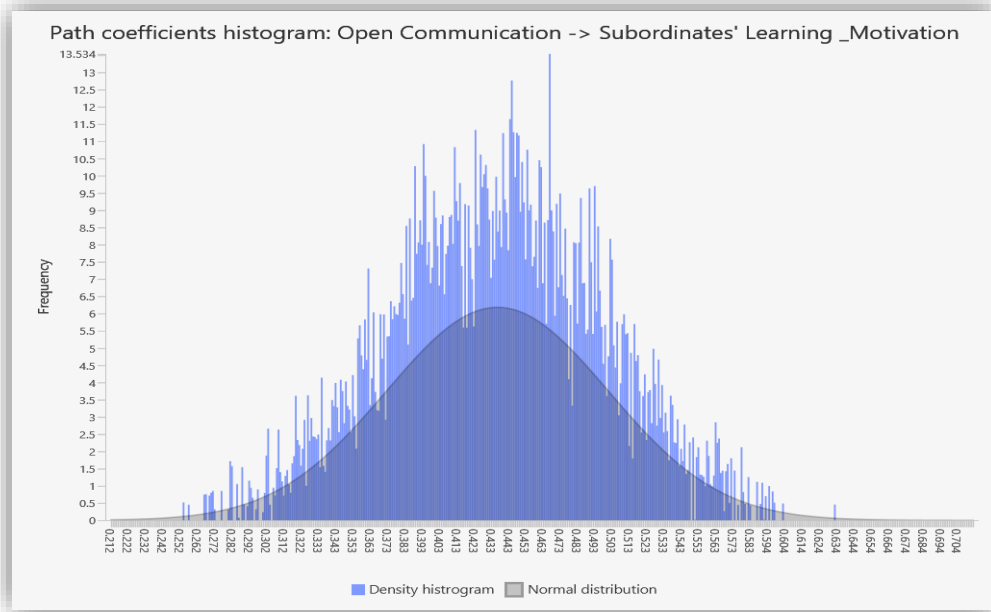


Figure 4: Path Coefficients for H2a

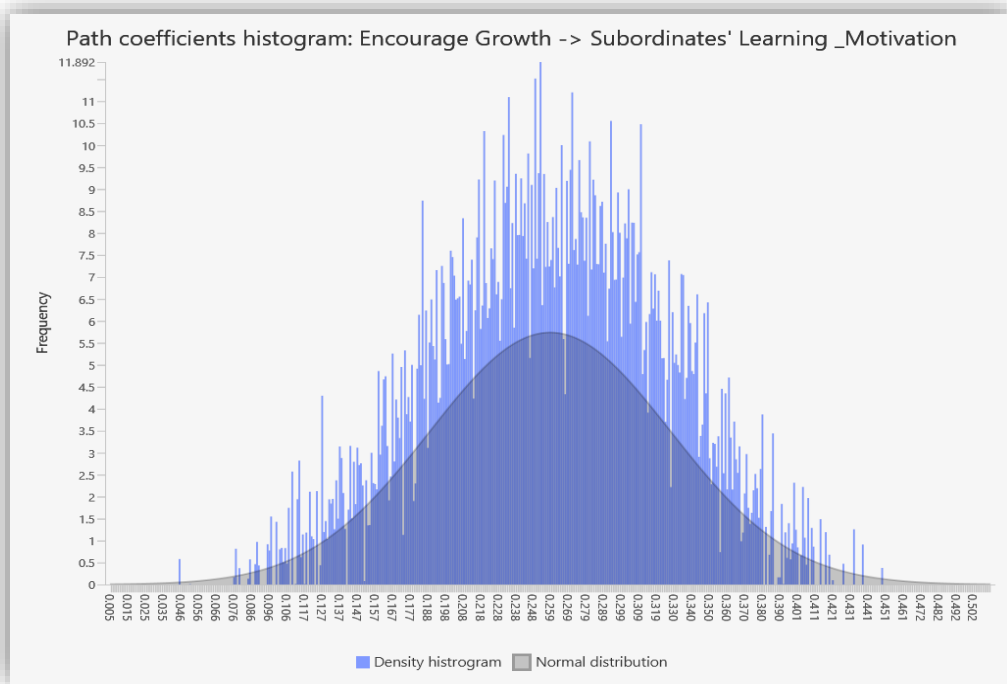


Figure 5: Path Coefficients for H2b

Table 10 presents the findings of indirect effect hypotheses. The analysis revealed two significant findings. First, open communication and subordinates' learning motivation positively and significantly affect talent development (H3a, $\beta=0.208$; $t=5.100$; $p=0.000$). Second, encouraging growth and subordinates' learning motivation positively and significantly affect talent development (H3b, $\beta=0.123$; $t=3.226$; $p=0.001$). Therefore, H3a and H3b are supported. Figures 6 and 7 show the path coefficients for the indirect hypotheses.

Table 10. The results of the hypotheses testing of the research model (indirect effect)

Relationship	Beta	t-statistics (O/STDEV)	p-values
H3a: Open Communication -> Subordinates' Learning Motivation -> Talent Development	0.208	5.100	0.000
H3b: Encouraging Growth -> Subordinates' Learning Motivation -> Talent Development	0.123	3.226	0.001

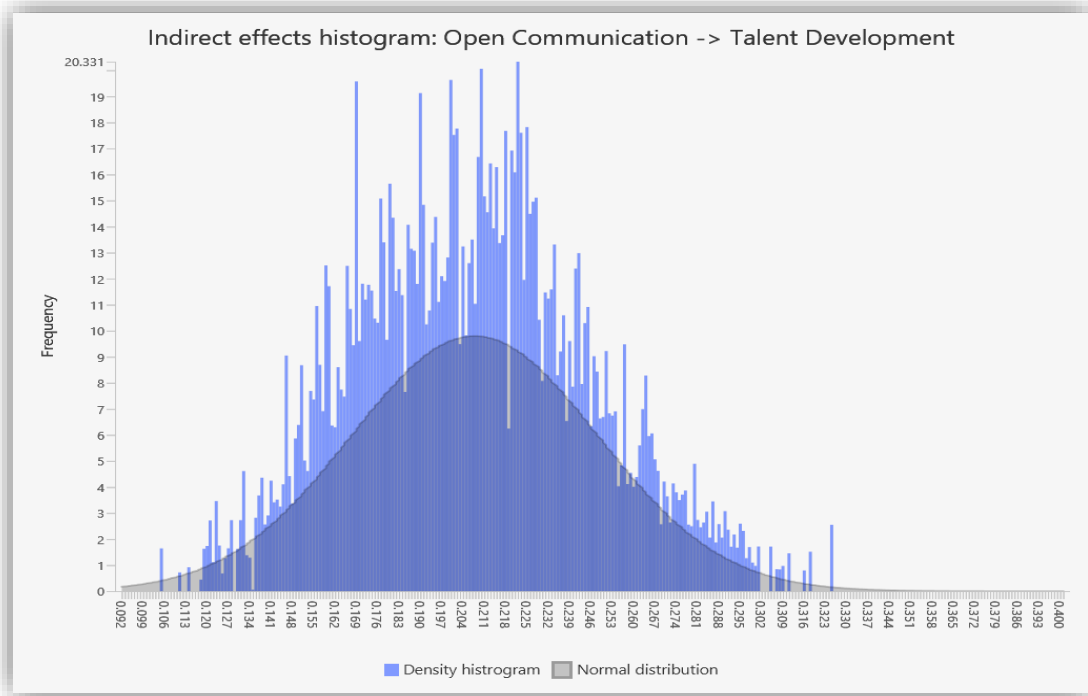


Figure 6: Path Coefficients for H3a

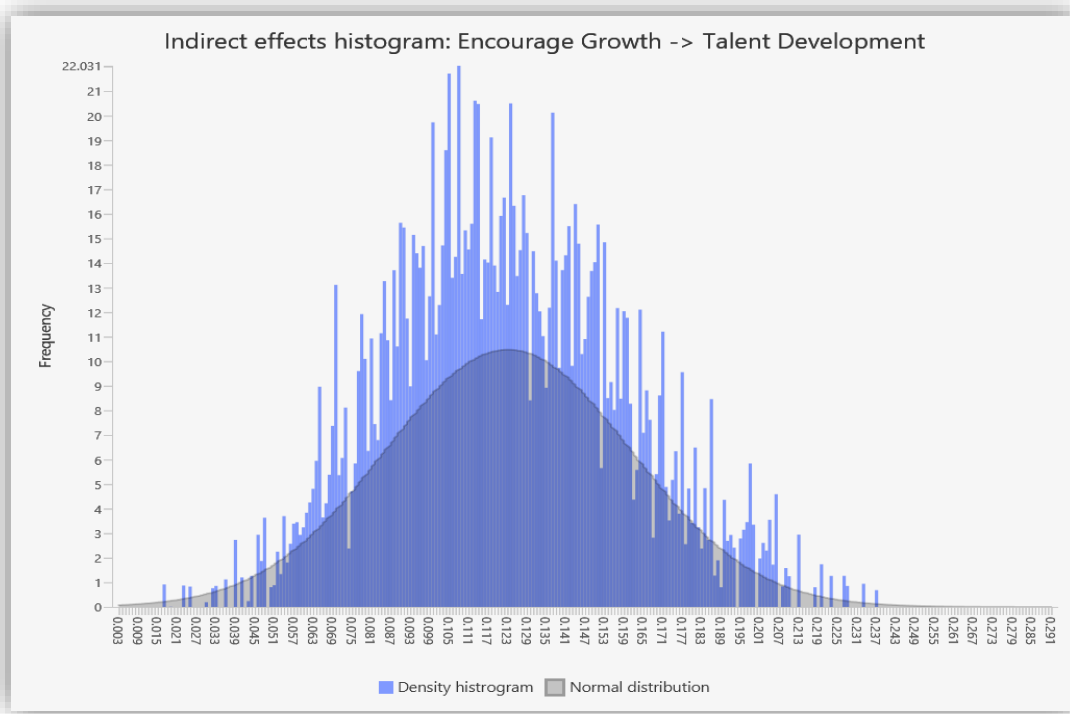


Figure 7: Path Coefficients for H3b

DISCUSSION

This research contributes empirical evidence to the growing body of literature highlighting the importance of positive relationships between immediate superiors and subordinates and their impact on desired outcomes. Specifically, it affirms that subordinates' learning motivation plays a significant role as a mediating factor in the relationship between managerial coaching (e.g., open communication and encouraging growth) and talent development. In the study context, most participants perceived managerial coaching, subordinates' learning motivation, and talent development to be exceptionally high. It indicates that the active involvement of immediate superiors in fostering open communication and encouraging growth and development can enhance subordinates' learning motivation, subsequently leading to increased talent development. These findings are consistent with previous research on managerial coaching within organisational settings.

The study's findings have significant implications across three key areas: theoretical, methodological, and practical. Concerning theoretical implications, the study identifies three crucial insights: Firstly, managerial coaching, exemplified by open communication and encouraging growth, emerges as a vital precursor to talent development. This observation aligns with prior research on managerial coaching, which underscores its pivotal role in enhancing talent development within organisations (Wang et al., 2022; Niu et al., 2022; Ismail et al., 2023). Secondly, managerial coaching is also a critical factor influencing subordinates' learning motivation. Previous studies have consistently shown that managerial coaching practices, including open communication and support for growth, positively impact subordinates' learning motivation (Hui, Law & Lau, 2020; Wang et al., 2022; Nyfoudi et al., 2023). Lastly, subordinates' learning motivation is identified as an effective mediator in the relationship between managerial coaching and talent development. This finding is corroborated by previous research, emphasising the pivotal role of subordinates' learning motivation as a mediating variable in this relationship (Ismail et al., 2023; Nyfoudi et al., 2023; Kim, Park & Yoon, 2023).

Concerning methodological implications, the survey questionnaire data collected underwent rigorous validity and reliability analyses, ensuring the robustness of the research methodology. This thorough approach enhances confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the research findings.

Concerning practical contributions, there are several critical recommendations for immediate superiors within organisations: Firstly, enhancing communication - immediate superiors should prioritise developing effective and robust communication channels with their subordinates. It entails honing active listening and negotiation skills to foster collaboration and optimise performance across the board. Secondly, cultivating accountability - immediate superiors must focus on cultivating a culture of accountability among subordinates. It involves developing skills to promote accountability and addressing individual challenges constructively to enhance overall work performance. Thirdly, resolving organisational conflicts - it is crucial for immediate superiors to possess adept conflict resolution skills to proactively manage and prevent disagreements within the organisation. In unavoidable circumstances, they should be prepared to address conflicts, foster harmony, and devise positive solutions to enable subordinates to continue their tasks smoothly. Fourthly, providing feedback - previous research indicates that subordinates value actionable feedback to sustain performance improvements. Therefore, immediate superiors should offer constructive feedback that motivates subordinates, fosters engagement in positive work environment. Lastly, utilising various learning techniques - employing diverse learning methods, such as observational and experiential learning, blended learning, and active learning through both in-person and online platforms, is crucial to effectively inspire, facilitate, guide, and exemplify interaction concepts among subordinates.

CONCLUSION

The results of the bootstrapping analysis using SmartPLS software confirm that subordinates' learning motivation can serve as an influential mediating variable in the relationship between managerial coaching and talent development. These primary findings are consistent with and supported by numerous articles published in the 21st century, which explore the phenomenon of managerial coaching in both Western and Asian countries. In summary, this study concludes that the ability of immediate superiors to implement elements of managerial coaching, such as open communication and encouraging growth, can positively impact subordinates' learning motivation. It, in turn, can enhance talent development within the organisation under study.

In conclusion, several constraints should be noted. Firstly, the characteristics of the respondents' profiles were not analysed in either the measurement or structural models. Secondly, the cross-sectional method only explains the general behaviour and attitudes of the respondents regarding the relationships between the study variables at a single point in time. Thirdly, this study primarily evaluates correlations between the study variables. Fourthly, the research model and hypotheses were tested exclusively within government service agencies in Malaysia. Fifthly, the research data obtained cannot track participants' responses and may not fully represent the broader population under study.

These shortcomings must be addressed through various enhancements and recommendations for future studies. Firstly, it is crucial to consider the characteristics of respondents, such as age, type of service, education, and length of service, as they may shed light on the differences and similarities in their behaviours

regarding the research topic. Secondly, longitudinal methods should be considered to track changes in sub-samples studied across different periods. Thirdly, specific characteristics of managerial coaching, such as goal setting, action planning, building self-awareness, emotional intelligence, providing feedback, and fostering accountability, warrant further investigation, as these traits can significantly influence employee behaviour. Fourthly, attributes of subordinates' learning motivation, including extrinsic and intrinsic factors, psychological empowerment, constructive voice behaviour, and communication (both formal and informal), merit deeper exploration. These recommendations should be duly considered to strengthen future studies. Lastly, talent development could be examined more comprehensively by incorporating elements of satisfaction with organisational aspects. These enhancements will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the relationships and dynamics within organisational settings.

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