

Role of Employee's Perception on Manager's Behaviour and Career Support in Building Cordial Relation between Managers and Subordinates

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Article History Received: 10 January 2021; Revised: 12 February 2021; Accepted: 27 March 2021; Published online: 28 April 2021

Abstract: Employees are the key component of any business organization. Job satisfaction of the employees and employee turnover in a firm largely depends on the intensity of healthy relationship between the supervisor and his subordinates. This study aims to examine the role of behavioral attributes of managers in building a cordial relation between manager and subordinate. Further, the study intended to explore the manager's career support and its effect on building a cordial relation between manager and subordinate. Data for the seven identified factors were collected from 149 IT professionals in the state of Kerala. Simple and step wise regression analysis were applied to study the effect of behavioral attributes on cordial relation. The result reveals that when studied independently, each behavioural attribute have a positive effect on cordial relationship with the manager. But it is found that when these variables were studied collectively, forgiveness doesn't have any influence on cordial relationship with the manager. The study explores the importance of managers behaviour in building a cordial relationship between managers and employees.

Keywords: Career Support, Compassion, Empathy, Consideration, Patience, Fairness, Forgiveness, Cordial Relation.

1. Introduction

In today's scenario, global competition has contributed to the creation of opportunities for talented people around the world leading to employee turnover issues in organizations (Jain & Nayyar, 2018). Retaining high potential employees have become vital for any organizations (Rathi & Lee, 2015). Every firm is unique in handling their people and is important to find out a method to inspire, encourage and satisfy their talents (people) to retain them (Priyadarshini, 2018). As employees are the asset of an organization it should focus on increasing employee's satisfaction (Barpanda & Unnithan, 2019). Satisfaction could be enriched with the influence of (managers) leaders (Goud, et al., 2017). The main strategy of Employee relationship management (ERM) is to enhance mutual values for employers and employees to create competitive advantage and its main domains are recruitment, development, and compensation (Strohmeier, 2013). Employment relationship creates reciprocal rights and obligations between employee and employer (Bingham, 2016). Cases where formal work relationship is insufficient to perform the job effectively, managers tend to build an informal relation with their subordinates (Kotter, 1982). Here managers need to understand the factors that could enhance the relationship with subordinates. Hence, in this study we have focused on the perception of employees towards career support and manager's behavioral attributes. This study is intended to explore the relationship between the career support, manager's behavioral attributes and cordial relationship between managers and subordinates. And finally, to understand the extent of relationship between these variables.

2. Literature Review

Character

Character is a central component of leadership and its development (Hannah & Avolio, 2011). Character is referred to as a combination of virtues, personality traits and values. According to Heraclitus, character is a man's fate and is a base for effective decision making and functioning (Seijts, et al., 2015). Ethical and moral belief, intentions and behaviors constitute a leader's character and are linked with integrity, justice and fairness (Bass & Bass, 2008). Character, competence and commitment are the three pillars of effective leadership and any shortcoming in any of the three pillars would have an effect on other pillars ultimately affecting the performance (Seijts, et al., 2015). The reason for the failure of a leader is lack of character than lack of competence (Mason, 1992). So, we can say character is as important as competence and commitment. Character can be developed through goal setting, practice and reflection. (Seijts, et al., 2015).

Cordial Relationship

Building cordial relationship with employees is one of the objectives of industrial relation and organizations aim to achieve warmth and friendliness in their relation with employees (Durai, 2010). In an organization, ideal situation is when employees experience a high-quality supervisor – subordinate relationship (Farr-Wharton, et al., 2011). Supervisor – subordinate relationship, the building block of any organization is a critical element as the efforts for achieving organizational goals are taking place at this level (Barone, 1996). Superior - subordinate relationship has an impact on organizational commitment (Nystrom, 1990). Employee’s commitment towards supervisor is based on their belief about supervisor’s commitment towards them (Neves, 2012). The quality of the relation between leader and member (employee- manager relationship) mediates fairness perception and employee’s performance (outcome) (Masterson, et al., 2000). Fairness is one of the significant dimensions which affects the actions and reaction of employees within the organization (Masterson, et al., 2000). The effort put forth by subordinates on their job and their satisfaction and performance are influenced by the attitude and behavior of supervisors (Klimoski & Hayes, 1980). Humanitarian characteristics like consideration, compassion, empathy and forgiving are important in the organizational context as, is the fundamental strength which foster quality and candid conversation and such acts are important for good human relationships; otherwise followers may reject their leaders. (Seijts, et al., 2015).

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Supervisor Support: The benefit of social exchange relationship between superior and subordinate is the exchange of mutual support (Blau, 1964). Supportiveness is a characteristic of superior. Supportive relationships are discretionary and are where managers provide support and assistance to others (David, et al., 2015). Supervisors support is an antecedent to perceived organizational support (POS) (Setton & Bennett, 1996). Greater the support given greater will be the employee’s obligation towards organization (Shore & Wayne, 1993). Employee citizenship is highly related to the superior – subordinate exchange relation (Setton & Bennett, 1996). High level of POS builds individuals commitment to repay the organization (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). Hence, we posit that higher the perceived superiors support; greater will be the cordial relation between them.

Proposition 1: Perceived supervisor support at workplace has a positive influence on the cordial relation with supervisor.

Perceived supervisor fairness: Supervisor-focused fairness is understood as the “degree to which one’s manager is perceived to be fair” (Colquitt & Rodell, 2015). Fairness in allocation of work and reward acts as a central part in assessing a leader’s justness act (Seijts, et al., 2015). Amiable employee relation is constructed on fairness, trust and mutual respect (Rojalin & Chandan, 2018). Employee misbehavior is low where the subordinates perceive their manager fair and supportive (Everton et.al 2007). Unfair treatment of employees would reciprocate as negative attitude among employees towards management. (Yean & Yusof, 2016). Fairness at work is perceived not only by the way one gets treated but also on the perception they have on whether their colleague or co-worker are being treated fairly. According to the Equity theory of Adam, an employee measure fairness by comparing their outcome with other’s outcome. When the contribution is greater than reward employees tend to show dissatisfaction, which results in unruly behavior, low commitment and increased absenteeism. In the organizational context, ‘justice’ is used as a synonym for ‘fairness’ and it refers to the perception of employees on the extent to which management’s decisions and actions are fair (Yean & Yusof, 2016). Managers act as an agent for employers (Bingham, 2016). Hence, we postulate that the perception on the manager’s decisions and actions to be fair influence the supervisor - subordinate relation positively.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived supervisor justice (fairness) influences cordial relation with supervisor positively.

Consideration: For a great relationship, mutual care is important. In the organization employees expect their leaders to care their needs and wants. Manager is in his mentor/coach role focus on each employee need for achievement and growth (Boerner, et al., 2007). Consideration as a leader behavior deals with being sociable, participative, pleasant, egalitarian and concerned about the welfare of the employees (Seltzer & Bass, 1990) and has positive relation with the follower’s satisfaction and motivation (Judge, et al., 2004). Consideration is referred to the extent to which a leader displays concern and respect for members in groups, watch out for their welfare and express appreciation and support (Bass, 1990). The concern shown towards the employees by their supervisor is for employee’s welfare and hence, we posit that consideration has a positive effect on cordial relation among supervisor and subordinates.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived supervisor’s consideration for subordinates influences the relation between them positively.

Empathy: Emotions are important at workplace as it influence one's career advancement (Gentry, et al., 2015). Empathy is the emotional ability (Kellett, et al., 2006) i.e., the ability to comprehend and re-experience the experience of another person by one-self (Salovey & Meyer, 1990). Providing information about the future action of other people and serving as a motivator of cooperative and pro-social behavior are the main two roles of empathy (Vignemont & Singer, 2006). Empathy is fundamental to leadership (Sadri, et al., 2011) and has a positive association with relational leadership and task leadership (Kellett, et al., 2006). The charismatic leaders are said to have three behaviors such as envisioning, empathy and empowerment (Choi, 2006). Empathic managers show positive responses towards others such as concern, warmth and compassion and an increased daily goal progress was shown by the employees with such managers (Scott, et al., 2010). Empathy is a humanity character of leaders which helps them to understand the feelings of their people and to develop followership (Seijts, et al., 2015). Empathetic character thus helps supervisors to create a good relationship with their followers.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived empathetic character of supervisor positively influences the cordial relation between them.

Compassion: Compassion is a positive feeling characterized by warmth, concern, empathy and care for others and an inspiration to look into others well-being by helping them to overcoming their problems (Singer & Klimecki, 2014) (Boyatzis, et al., 2012). The two poles of compassion, sharing and aid, are one's capacity and belief that he/she listens & suffer along with the suffering and helping them to overcome it (Barbot & Dodier, 2015). A stronger interpersonal relationship, connectedness, helping behavior and moral reasoning are displayed by a compassionate person (Cassel, 2002) (Bright, et al., 2006). The three components in compassion such as, noticing another's need or desire, empathic concern and enhancement of well-being make the coachee feel valued and cared by the coach (boss) and results in greater organizational commitment (Boyatzis, et al., 2012). In the organizational context, compassion at work place is the concern for others such as subordinate or colleague and an act that would benefit them without expecting organizational benefit (Eldor & Shoshani, 2016). Studies have revealed that, compassion at workplace would enhance employee productivity, strengthens work bonds, view peers as more humane and organization more caring (Dutton, et al., 2002) (Lilius, et al., 2008).

Hypothesis 5: Perceived supervisor compassion at workplace has a positive influence on cordial relation among supervisors and subordinates.

Forgiveness: Forgiveness is mental and emotional human virtue and has a common place in interpersonal interaction. Forgiveness is the willingness of a person to trust and like those who have caused harm (Lee & Ashton, 2004). A study on forgiveness and personality traits revealed that extraversion (positive emotion and warmth facet) and agreeableness is positively correlated with forgiveness whereas neuroticism is negatively correlated. Other two factors, openness and conscientiousness are no way related to forgiveness (Brose, et al., 2005). Forgiveness can arise at organizational level beyond the individual level (Fehr & Gelfand, 2012). In the organization, forgiveness is said to have taken place when all the negative feelings are abandoned and replaced by positive emotions (Cameron, 2007). Dispositional forgiveness, restoration forgiveness, compassion, hope, respect and integrity are the six organizational virtues and organizational forgiveness improves productivity of employees and lower employee turnover (Cameron, et al., 2004). Hence, managers should encourage and reassure forgiveness in the organization avoiding revengeful actions (Aquino, et al., 2006). Forgiveness is also the humanity character of leader which would develop the followership (Seijts, et al., 2015).

Proposition 6: Perceived supervisor's forgiveness character at workplace has a positive influence on cordial relation between supervisors and subordinates.

Patience: Temperance (calm and patient characteristics) results in the best action by a leader and helps the leaders not to overreact to short term success or failure but to assess risks and rewards of alternative courses of action (Seijts, et al., 2015). Effective leaders have appropriate emotions like calmness and patience while dealing with a situation (Pardey, 2006). Tolerance on inconvenience, keeping emotions under control, doing work correctly under stressful conditions and restraining negative actions are the behavioral indicators of calmness and patience (Zhang, et al., 2001). Patience, identified as character strength in the workplace (Seijts, et al., 2017) is the propensity to remain calm rather than to become angry in the face of frustration or adversity or suffering (Lee & Ashton, 2004) (Schnitker, 2012). People with patient strength report to have a higher goal achievement and satisfaction facilitating well-being (Schnitker, 2012). Calmness can be stated as the ability of a person to have a clear and quick thought process without being panic and aggressive but conveying the urgency when necessary (Smith, et al., 2011). Calmness is humane qualities which inspires and bring harmony to the life (Snellman, et al., 2012). Managers / leaders as they deal with people should be the owners of right attitude and approach towards others.

Hypothesis 7: Perceived supervisor's patience at workplace positively influences the cordial relation between supervisor and subordinate.

4. Measurement

Cordial Relation

Guanxi means an informal tie between two individuals and we have studied relation with manager using 3 items from supervisor-subordinate guanxi scale developed by Chen et.al (2009).

Career Support

The degree to which supervisor provide information on employee's career opportunity and supportive feedback on performance is referred as supervisor support (Jiang & Klein, 1999). Perceived career support was measured using three items from six item scale adopted from Jiang & Kiein, 1999.

Compassion

Compassion is defined as 'being moved by another's suffering and wanting to help' (Lazarus, 1991). To measure supervisor's compassion, we have modified and adopted 6 items from 21 item scale developed by Sprecher & Fehr (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005).

Empathy

Empathy is understood as the tendency of a person to perceive another's feelings, thoughts, and behavior as like his own (Payne & Gralinski, 1968). We have taken 8 items from the empathy scale used by Payne & Granlinski (1968). This scale was originally used by Barrett- Lennard (1962).

Consideration

The leader behavior which concerns the comfort, well-being, status and contribution of subordinates is referred as consideration (Stogdill, 1963). 4 items from LBDQ-XII scale were used to measure consideration behavior of supervisor.

Patience

Patience is defined as 'the state of remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome' (Danker, 2000). In order to measure patience, five items were adopted from Bocarnea et al. (2018).

Fairness

Justice is identified as organizational fairness and procedural justice is the perception of employees about their manager's fairness in developing and uniformly enforcing policies and procedures (Brashear, et al., 2004). We measured fairness as procedural justice of managers using six items from Brashear et al., 2004.

Forgiveness

The degree to which the negative emotions evoked by the offense is released is termed as forgiveness (Aquino, et al., 2006). The four itme developed by Aquino et al. is used to measure forgiveness.

5. Result

First phase of analysis includes reliability tests and tools used are Cronbach alpha, KMO and Bartlett's test. In the second phase simple and stepwise multiple regressions are performed.

Reliability Test of Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha which is used to test the internal consistency of items in the group is the confirmatory measure of the unidimensionality, once the existence of single factor has been established (Cortina, 1993). The sample used in the study is adequate at Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin, KMO = (.827) showing strong relationship among variables. Bartlett’s test of sphericity showed significance at $p < 0.05$, $\chi^2 = 576.756$, $df = 28$. Hence the data is efficient to perform principal component analysis. All the variables are inter-correlated (see Table:1) and the highest correlation is reported between support and cordial relation.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation and Inter-correlation between Character Variables

	Mean	S. D	Correlations						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	1.82	0.61							
Empathy	2.52	0.70	.48**						
Consideration	1.71	0.57	.54**	.21**					
Compassion	2.30	0.65	.47**	.53**	.37**				
Forgiveness	2.04	0.61	.30**	0.03	.59**	.24**			
Fair	1.79	0.78	.50**	0.12	.71**	.31**	.58**		
Patience	2.99	0.73	.22**	.45**	0.07	.35**	-0.09	-0.10	
Cordial Relation	2.08	0.74	.75**	.60**	.57**	.60**	.28**	.50**	.39**

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

In order to understand the individual effect of each behavioral attributes on cordial relation, we have performed simple regression and was found that career support and behavioral attributes has an effect on cordial relation. The report supports the 7 hypothesis (see table 2) and highest effect was reported for career support ($\beta = 0.745$) followed by empathy ($\beta = 0.603$), compassion ($\beta = 0.603$), consideration ($\beta = 0.566$), fairness ($\beta = 0.505$), patience ($\beta = 0.392$) and forgiving ($\beta = 0.278$).

Table 2. Individual Effect of Perception of Supervisor’s Behavioural Attributes on Cordial Relation

Predictors	R	R Square	df	F-value	Unstandardized	Standardised	t - value
Career Support	0.745	0.554	(1, 147)	182.816	0.899	0.745	13.521***
Empathy	0.603	0.364	(1, 147)	83.968	0.239	0.603	9.163***
Consideration	0.566	0.321	(1, 147)	69.388	0.551	0.566	8.33***
Compassion	0.603	0.363	(1, 147)	83.917	0.402	0.603	9.161***
Forgiving	0.278	0.077	(1, 147)	12.276	0.250	0.278	3.504***
Fairness	0.505	0.255	(1, 147)	50.439	0.239	0.505	7.102***
Patience	0.392	0.154	(1, 147)	26.706	0.237	0.392	5.168***

Note: *** = p value < 0.001

Further to understand the order of importance of behavioural attributes stepwise regression analysis is used (Thompson, 1995). Career support, which has the strongest effect on cordial relation was included in the first model and was significant at $F(1, 147) = 182.816$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.554$. Second model added compassion with support, and it is noted that R^2 has increased to 0.638 and the model showed a significance at $F(2, 146) = 128.812$, $p < 0.05$. Thirdly, the model added empathy and reported a significant at $F(3, 145) = 98.676$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.671$. Further, consideration was added to the model (fourth model) which is significant at $F(4, 144) = 84.775$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.702$. Fifth model included patience of managers as the variable that could influence cordial relation, significant at $F(5, 145) = 71.948$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.716$. The final model included fairness along with support, compassion, empathy, consideration and patience and overall model is significant at $F(6, 142) = 63.499$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.728$. The t-statistic for support, compassion, empathy, consideration and patience were significant at $p < 0.05$. But it was found that the t-statistic for “consideration” was not significant when fairness was added to the model. Hence, we conclude that support, compassion, empathy, consideration, patience and fairness are the behavioural

attributes which managers should instil to develop a good relationship with their subordinates. In the case of forgiveness character, even though it had significance when considered distinctively, it reported in the stepwise regression that forgiveness was not significant when analysed collectively with other managerial characteristics.

Table 3. Model of Supervisor’s Behavioural Attributes on Cordial Relation

Model	Predictors	R	R Square	df	F-value	Unstandardized	Standardised	t - value
1	Career support	0.745	0.554	(1, 147)	182.82	0.90	0.75	13.52***
2	Career support Compassion	0.799	0.638	(2, 146)	128.81	0.72 0.22	0.59 0.33	10.53*** 5.82***
3	Career support Compassion Empathy	0.819	0.671	(3, 145)	98.68	0.64 0.16 0.09	0.53 0.24 0.23	9.33*** 4.04*** 3.81***
4	Career support Compassion Empathy Consideration	0.838	0.702	(4, 144)	84.78	0.51 0.13 0.10 0.20	0.42 0.20 0.25 0.21	6.97*** 3.44*** 4.38*** 3.85***
5	Career support Compassion Empathy Consideration Patience	0.846	0.716	(5, 143)	71.95	0.51 0.12 0.08 0.22 0.08	0.42 0.17 0.20 0.22 0.13	7.11*** 3.04** 3.40*** 4.11*** 2.62**
6	Career support Compassion Empathy Consideration Patience Fairness	0.854	0.728	(6, 142)	63.49	0.47 0.10 0.09 0.12 0.1 0.08	0.39 0.15 0.22 0.12 0.17 0.17	6.43*** 2.76** 3.70*** 1.82(ns) 3.22** 2.6**

Note: *** = p value < 0.001, ** = p value, ns = not significant

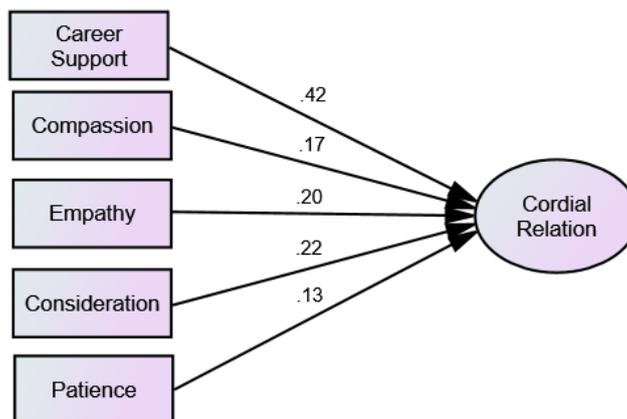


Fig. 1. Model I

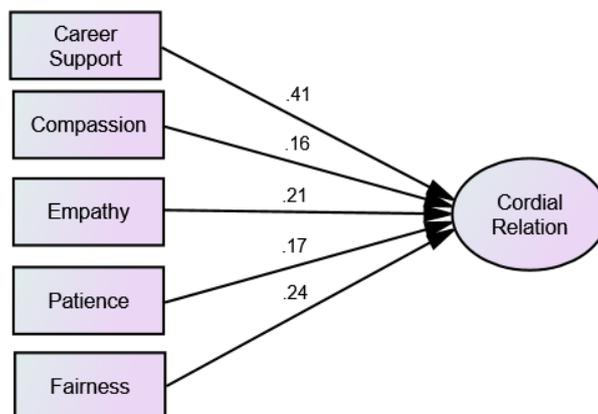


Fig. 2. Model II

6. Discussion

This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the influence of manager's behavioural attributes and career support on building cordial relation between managers and subordinates. The study first investigated the individual effect of manager's behaviour attribute on cordial relation and then evaluated the order of importance of attributes in building cordial relation. The result showed that, there is a positive association between manager's support, behavioural attributes and cordial relation. Two models showed significance relationship with cordial relation. In both models, managers career support, compassion, empathy and patience have effect on cordial relation. Regarding the variables, consideration and fairness, it was found that when fairness was included in the model, manager's consideration become insignificant. The result of the study highlights the importance of fairness in model II (see Fig: 2).

A good working environment motivates people in contributing towards effective and efficient performance. Hence it is important for any organization to have a good rapport and relation with their people. Our research highlights the importance of career support given to employees and fairness in action by managerial level people in building good relationship with employees. Managers should focus on inculcating the attributes like compassion, empathy and patience to handle their people effectively.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of career support and manager's behavioural attributes in building cordial relation with employees. For this, the study was done among IT professionals. The empirical study supports all the hypothesis and established the effect of perceived career support, empathy, consideration, compassion, forgiveness, fairness and patience of manager on cordial relation. Further to explore the order of importance of each variable, stepwise regression was performed. The result revealed that, career support, compassion, empathy, patience and fairness are the important factors that have an influence on building cordial relation. The understanding and inculcation of these attributes by managers will enable a good relationship with employees.

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