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MANAGERIAL COACHING: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF

ROLE CLARITY ON EMPLOYEE TUROVER INTENTION

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MANAGERIAL COACHING: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF
ROLE CLARITY ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
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ABSTRACT

State and local governmental agencies are challenged by the turnover of capable

employees. Consequently, human resource practitioners and agency heads must

develop effective organizational strategies that will train leaders and retain the

workforce. Managerial coaching is a new leadership approach that is popularized as a

way of developing, empowering and retaining employees in organizations. However,

few empirical studies have examined the linkage between managerial coaching and its

potential impact on employee attitudes such as turnover intention. More specifically,

limited research exists in the area of mediating factors that could potentially influence

the relationship between managerial coaching and its presumed outcomes. Analyzing

data collected from 372 state governmental employees, this study investigated how

managerial coaching was mediated by role clarity that contributed to turnover intention.

The research results found that managers' coaching behaviors was directly related to

employees' improved role clarity and indirectly related to lower turnover intentions via

role clarity.

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Employee turnover occurs when an individual exits an organization whether voluntary or involuntary. Nationwide, employee turnover within state governmental agencies has become a significant concern. According to the National Center of State and Local Government Excellence (2014) workforce survey, retaining qualified personnel was among the top workforce issues reported by Human Resource (HR) administrators. A recent report released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) showed the quit rate within local and state government. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has defined the quit rate as the voluntary separation or resignation initiated by the employee. The quit rate increased from 159,000 in 2015 to 174,000 in 2016 for local and state governments. This upsurge in the number of quits indicates that employees' leaving is a troublesome occurrence for state and local governmental entities.

Before an employee leaves an organization, he or she typically makes plans to leave. This is referred to as turnover intention. Turnover intention is the likelihood an individual will depart an organization at some point in the near future. Turnover intention has been found to be a strong predictor to actual turnover (Bluedorn, 1982; Hom & Griffeth, 1995). In their meta-analysis, Cotton and Tuttle (1986) identified work-related variables associated with turnover intentions and behavior. These work-related variables included pay, job performance, role clarity, and job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with work itself, satisfaction with supervision, and satisfaction with co-workers. Pinpointing factors contributing to employee turnover intention may be helpful in reducing actual turnover.

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In Oklahoma, employee turnover in state governmental agencies is a growing problem. Turnover data collected in state fiscal year (sfy) 2012 revealed the overall turnover rate (i.e. resignations, retirements, discharges and deaths) among state employees was 16.5% and the voluntary rate (i.e. resignations and retirements) was 13.8%. The highest reason for turnover was resignation, which climbed from 3350 in sfy12 to 3874 in sfy15. A trend analysis showed that the overall turnover rate among state employees has steadily risen in the last six years from 13.2% in sfy09 to18.4% in sfy15 (compared to the regional average at 16%) while the voluntary turnover rate has climbed from 10.4% in sfy09 to 14.9% in sfy15 (Oklahoma Office of Management Enterprise Annual Report, 2014). In light of these issues, reducing employee turnover should be a high priority for state agency administrators as the indirect and direct costs associated with employee turnover could hinder the bottom line success of their organization. Abbasi and Hollman (2000) contended that for some governmental agencies when excessive employee turnover occurs it can negatively impact the overall productivity and morale of the employees who are left to pick up the slack. They further stated that turnover can adversely impact the innovation and quality of services delivered and subsequently affect the satisfaction and outcomes of customers.

Moreover, replacing employees is costly for organizations as expenses for recruitment, advertising, candidate interviews, background checks, hiring, orientation, and training can be enormous. According to Oklahoma's Office of Management Enterprise 2014 Annual Compensation Report, in sfy14, the average per person turnover cost for state agencies was $31,539.42 and the annual cost was assessed at $102,345,402.68. As state governmental agencies in Oklahoma continue to face

budgetary shortfalls and other fiscal constraints, they cannot afford to waste money on turnover costs or lost productivity. Therefore, in order for state governmental agencies to survive and thrive in a capricious economic climate, it is imperative the Human Resource (HR) administrators develop organizational strategies that will influence the retention of capable employees (Abbassi and Hollman, 2000).

According to Johnson (2007), employee retention is heavily reliant upon two important factors. One factor entails the leadership skills of managers and the other factor involves human resource strategy. Managers' influence on employee attitudes has become more realized as organizations have started to recognize the role of managerial behavior in shaping employee behavior and attitude. Thus, one approach that has shown effective in reducing turnover intention is utilizing managers and leaders as coaches.

In recent years, managerial coaching has emerged in the research literature as a new leadership paradigm that focuses on collaboration, empowerment and self-direction rather than the traditional command, control and directive model (Evered & Selman, 1989; Kim, 2014). Managerial coaching has gained tremendous popularity in both practitioner and scholarly works as a management approach that advances employee learning and effectiveness and organizational competiveness (Kim, Egan, Kim & Kim, 2013). Some scholars (Ellinger, Ellinger, Hamlin & Beattie, 2010) have touted managerial coaching as an essential instrument of support. In addition, previous studies have identified a myriad of positive outcomes as a result of coaching on both the individual and organizational levels (Hagen, 2012). Several research studies (Ellinger et. al., 2010; Gilley, Gilley & Kouider, 2010; Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie, 2009; Kim,

2014) provide evidence of positive associations between managerial coaching and desirable outcomes such as job performance, role clarity, employee development, motivation, working relationships, job satisfaction, and career and organizational commitment. Furthermore, employees who receive coaching from his or her manager are less likely to contemplate turnover (Har, 2008; Park, 2007). Even though research suggests that coaching is an effectual leadership practice, there are still some scholars who doubt whether it actually works (Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie, 2006; Zemke, 1996). This skepticism, in part, may be due to the dearth of sound and sufficient empirical research on the subject matter.

Though managerial coaching is increasingly recognized as a positive feature of employee and organizational development, the literature remains mostly practice-based and largely untested through empirical inquiry. In addition, few empirical studies have been conducted in public organizations namely state governmental agencies (Kim, Egan & Moon, 2014). With that in mind, more rigorous study is warranted to help solidify managerial coaching as an evidence-based practice. While most of the research on managerial coaching has been correlational largely focused on the direct impact it has on employees and organizations. Limited empirical work exists in the study of intervening or mediating factors that may be influencing the relationship between managerial coaching and its presumed outcomes (Hagen, 2012).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to extend previous managerial coaching research and investigate role clarity as a mediating factor between perceived managerial coaching behaviors and turnover intention. Lacking clarity in terms of understanding one's job position and work responsibilities could be a reason employees leave his or her

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organization (Bertelli, 2007). Research (Kim, Egan & Moon, 2014) reveals role clarity is a crucial work-related attitudinal variable that is positively impacted by managerial coaching. This finding implies that constructive and practical feedback provided via managerial coaching can help employees boost awareness of their work-related roles and responsibilities (Kim, 2010). Hence, the question becomes: are employees who receive managerial coaching less likely to want to quit their organization if he or she has a clearer understanding of their job role?

A review of the existing literature uncovered only a few managerial coaching studies (Kim, 2014; Kim, Egan, Kim & Kim, 2013; Kim et al., 2014) that examined the mediating effect of role clarity. The studies investigated the relationship between perceived managerial coaching behaviors and select employee work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance and commitment and found a significant and positive effect. However, none of the studies considered turnover intention as an outcome variable. To date, this author has not discovered any study that has looked at the contribution of role clarity on the relationship between perceived managerial coaching behaviors and turnover intention. Existing research (Har, 2008; Park, 2007; Park, Yang, & McLean, 2008) found a significant, negative relationship between managers' coaching behavior and turnover intention. Yet, little has been written about the indirect link between the two variables. This study will also investigate the indirect impact of perceived managerial coaching behavior on turnover intention.

The current study will examine perceived managerial coaching behavior as the independent variable; perceived role clarity as the intervening variable; and turnover intention as the dependent variable. Investigating the aforementioned relationships may

generate insights into the potential impact role clarity has on the relationship between perceived managerial coaching behavior and turnover intention. Implications drawn from the findings of this empirical study could further inform organizations as to the possible advantages of employing managerial coaching as a strategy for improving employee role clarity and retention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the historical background of coaching in the workplace will be discussed. Following, the operational definitions of the variables for the study will be presented. Next, the research relevant to the variables will be introduced. Finally, the conceptual model and hypotheses will be set forth.

Origins of workplace coaching

Much of the literature on coaching in the management context has been derived from an athletic sports perspective. Prior to the 1950's, the mention of "coaching" may have triggered images of a clip board toting and whistle blowing sports coach. In the sports world, a coach is described as a trainer or leader for players and commonly understood as a means by which performance is improved (Hagen, 2012). Coaching made its appearance in the management literature in the 1950's as a means to develop employees through a master-apprentice type of relationship (Evered & Selman, 1989). This method of coaching usually occurred at the time of an annual performance review and was viewed as a means to correct deficiencies in job performance. Additionally, coaching became synonymous with job skills development. Managers began to recognize the advantages of on-the-job coaching as employees who received coaching

outperformed employees who did not; therefore, coaching was perceived as a basis for employees' high productivity.

In the late 1970's, the concept of coaching was further adapted in workplace settings. During this era, coaching articles appeared in the literature that translated sports coaching into managerial contexts and focused on guiding employees toward more effective performance. As the topic of coaching gained attention, some scholars (Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller, 2003) argued that converting the sports analogy of coaching into the business world was insufficient as a managerial practice.

Coaching evolved in the 1980's as a training technique within the context of management development. In this vein, coaching moved managers toward an approach emphasizing employee empowerment and development (Evered & Selman, 1989). Even with this paradigm shift, conceptually there remained inconsistencies in terms of "coaching" with the most common reproach being a lack of concept clarity and consensus definition (Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie, 2009). Because coaching is multidisciplinary, it takes on a wide variety of manifestations. Therefore, depending on the context, the notion of coaching can generate varying images and meanings.

Today, coaching is used by a multitude of organizations both in the private and public sector, and progressively becoming the preferred management style of the contemporary workplace. An annual survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2014) found that 76% of organizations currently utilized or were interested in coaching and 12% planned to offer it within the next year. Most of the organizations surveyed used trained line managers as coaches (42%) as opposed to external coaches (11%). Although coaching is becoming more commonplace in

organizations and published empirical research is increasing, there remains diverging

ideas as to what constitutes managerial coaching. So for the purpose of the current

study, a holistic view of managerial coaching as defined by Park, Yan and McLean

(2008) is adopted and described in the following paragraphs.

Managerial coaching

Most definitions of managerial coaching revolve around the ideas of empowering

people to make their own decision, unleashing their potential, enabling learning, and

improving performance (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Evered & Selman, 1989; Peterson

& Hicks, 1996). A manager who coaches exhibits specific behaviors that empower the

employee to learn and develop, and thereby improve performance (Ellinger, Beattie, &

Hamlin, 2010). In this study, the concept of managerial coaching is a process of

managers helping employees develop themselves, improve performance and maximize

their potential. In this model, coaching occurs on a regular basis, and utilizes various

techniques (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003; Park at el., 2008). Coaching is rooted

within the organizational culture, so that managers employ daily opportunities for

developing employees.

As previously mentioned, research showed (Ellinger & Bostrom 1999; Peterson &

Hicks 1996; Kim, 2014) increased role clarity has been identified as an outcome of

managerial coaching. Findings from Kim's studies (2010; 2014) revealed a strong,

positive link between managerial coaching and employee role clarity. Furthermore, role

clarity also had mediating associations on the relationships between managerial

coaching, employee job performance, employee satisfaction with work and organization

commitment. Through coaching, employees' self-awareness levels can be boosted in

terms of job role because coaching offers opportunities for employees to reflect on his or her job and seek constructive feedback for improvement. Peterson and Hicks (1996) found that systematic feedback via managerial coaching increased employee self-awareness on the job. They claimed that effective feedback allows employees to better understand his or her goals and responsibilities in relation to his or her organizational roles. Other researchers (Kim, Egan & Moon, 2014) propose that managerial coaching can be used to motivate and engage public employees with their work when he or she understands their organizational roles and receives recognition from their supervisors who are content with their results.

Role clarity

Role clarity is identified as a state of how employees perceive their role in a given organizational position (Kim, Egan & Moon, 2014). Employee role state is often discussed in terms of role ambiguity (i.e. lack of role clarity) in organizations. Role ambiguity (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970 p. 151) is the ''lack of necessary information regarding role expectation for a given organizational position''. When employees are uncertain of what is expected in terms of their job responsibilities stress levels can greatly increase, job satisfaction decreases as well as productivity (Rizzo, et.al, 1970). According to Wright and Davis (2003), employees want clear work expectations. Wright and Davis further mentioned that when employees are uncomfortable with the job and do not understand how the quality of his or her work is evaluated they are more likely to leave their organization. Empirical support, albeit limited, does exist on the effect managerial coaching has on clarifying employee knowledge of work-related roles. Results from previous studies (Fisher & Gitelson,

1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Kim, 2014; Kim, Egan, Kim & Kim, 2013; Rizzo et al., 1970) have concluded that increased role clarity via managerial support can enhance job satisfaction, work commitment and involvement, job performance, and retention.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to the employee's plans for leaving the organization (Bluedorn, 1982). The relationship between managerial coaching and turnover intention has been supported empirically in the literature (Har, 2008; Park, 2007; Park, Yang & McLean; 2008). The meta-analysis conducted by Cotton and Tuttle (1986) showed a strong, direct correlation between satisfaction with supervision and turnover. In other words, the more satisfied employees were with his or her supervisor the less likely they were to leave. Additional confirmation was provided by Park (2007) who studied the impact of managerial coaching on employees in a technology organization. The author found managerial coaching was negatively associated with employee turnover intention. Likewise, the results of Har's (2008) investigation on the impact of managerial coaching on employees' organizational commitment and turnover intention in Malaysia demonstrated a direct correlation between employees who perceived coaching behaviors and skills in their managers and reduced intentions to quit their organization. Park, Yang, and McLean (2008) reported the results of their study in which employees from a technology organization also supported the finding that when managerial coaching is used turnover intention is likely to be lower.

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

This study seeks to extend the research literature by incorporating the construct of role clarity, as an intervening variable, in the following conceptual model and examining its mediating effect on the relationship between perceived managerial coaching behavior and turnover intention.

According to Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998) two conditions are necessary and sufficient to establish indirect (or mediating) relations: 1) a significant direct association between the independent variable and the mediator variable; and 2) a significant direct association between the mediator variable and the dependent variable. The hypotheses for the below relationships satisfied the two necessary conditions. Thus, guided by earlier research discussed above the following hypotheses are proposed. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized direction of each association as well as the hypothesized relationships between each of the variables to be tested.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Conceptual Model of Managerial Coaching Outcomes
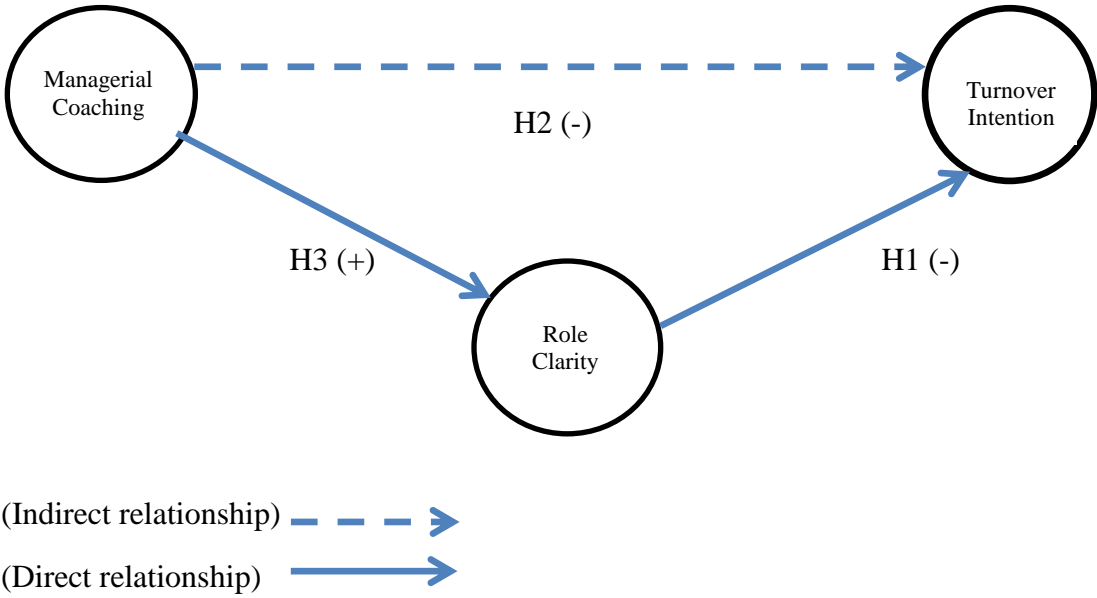
Hypotheses:

   H1: There will be a negative direct relationship between employee role clarity and turnover intentions (i.e. employees with high role clarity will have low turnover intention).

   H2: There will be a negative indirect relationship between perceived managerial coaching behavior and turnover intention. This relationship will be mediated through role clarity. (i.e. employees who perceive their manager's coaching behavior as high will have low turnover intention).

   H3: There will be a positive direct relationship between perceived managerial coaching behavior and role clarity. (i.e. employees who perceive their manager's coaching behavior as high will have high role clarity).

METHODOLOGY

   The methodology outlined for the present study provides a brief description of the study design, the participants of the study and the procedures utilized for the data collection. In addition, the measures employed to collect data and the data analysis strategies are discussed.

Study Design

   The purposes of this study are to investigate the direct and indirect relationships between perceived managerial coaching, role clarity and turnover intention as well as to examine the mediating effect of role clarity on turnover intention based on the self-perceptions of state governmental employees in Oklahoma. A cross-sectional survey design with a convenience sampling approach was taken for this study. Data used were collected from The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Services (ODMHSAS), a state governmental agency responsible for administering mental health and addiction services statewide.

Study Participants

The prospective participants consisted of approximately 1633 ODMHSAS employees representing all organizational levels (direct care staff, support staff, as well as those in administration/management roles). The agency has staff representation statewide. Therefore, the pool of participants spans all regions and areas of the state where the ODMHSAS operates. The participating agency was selected because it provided an opportunity to conduct convenience sampling.

Procedures

The ODMHSAS Human Resources (HR) department and leadership were contacted for their sponsorship of the study. The HR department assisted with the distribution of recruiting materials on behalf of the principal investigator. Due to time constraints and costs, an electronic survey via Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com), a survey service through the University of Oklahoma, was utilized as the most efficient and effective means to collect data. A recruitment email was sent with the online survey link to all employees introducing the purpose of the research project, contact information of the principal investigator and requesting voluntary participation in the study.

Once the employee clicked on the survey link, he or she was directed to an information sheet. The information sheet included the informed consent form, which required the participant to indicate their agreement or disagreement to participate. If the employee clicked the "Agree" button he or she was immediately connected to the

survey to complete. If the employee disagreed, he or she was automatically directed to an exit page.

The survey period was open to participants for a total of fourteen consecutive days. A second email was sent at the beginning of week two to only employees who had not completed the survey reminding them to participate. Participation was voluntary, responses were treated as anonymous and no incentives were provided to enhance participation. Participants were allowed to complete the online survey at his or her convenience and informed of the estimated timeframe to finish the survey.

Measures

Consistent with the aforementioned conceptual model and hypotheses being tested the survey protocol included three scales to measure the variables of the current investigation. These variables included managerial coaching behaviors, role clarity (ambiguity), and turnover intention. The instruments used in the survey totaled 17 items. The following items made up the components of the survey distributed to eligible respondents. The survey had four sections. The first part included demographic information such as gender, job position, organization tenure, job location, employment status and race/ethnicity. The second part included statements about the employees' perception of his or her manager's coaching behavior in the workplace. The third part included statements about the employees' self- perception in terms of role clarity and the final section measured turnover intention.

All the survey measures have been previously confirmed in earlier empirical research as valid and reliable. Chronbach's alpha greater than .70 (> .70) is considered reliable for the internal consistency of the instruments (Kline, 2005). Unless otherwise

specified, all items were presented to the participants as a series of statements to which he or she was asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree along a five-point Likert response scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Managerial Coaching Behavior

The *Supervisory Coaching Behavior* instrument developed by Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller (2003) was used to measure the coaching behavior of employees' immediate supervisors. The eight items of the instrument were designed based on the findings of a previous qualitative critical incident study, which explored how high performing managers coach his or her employees in organizations (Ellinger, 1997). A sample item is "my manager sets expectations with employees and communicates the importance of those expectations to the broader goals of the company". Cronbach's alpha for the instrument was 0.93.

Role Clarity

This variable was measured with six items adopted from the *Role Conflict and Ambiguity Scale* developed by Rizzo, House & Lirtzman (1970). This instrument included items for both role conflict and role ambiguity. Although, only the role ambiguity dimension was applied in the survey in order to meet the study purpose, the adapted version was confirmed in a previous study as reliable and valid (Kim, 2014). A sample item is "I know what my responsibilities are". Chronbach's alpha values for this scale range from 0.71 to 0.95.

Turnover Intention

Cohen's (1998) three-item turnover intention scale was used to measure intentions to leave. In Cohen's study, the scale's coefficient alpha was found to be 0.82. The

respondents were asked to indicate his or her agreement with the following three items: "I think a lot about quitting my job"; "I am actively searching for an alternative to my present job"; and "As soon as possible, I will leave this organization".

Data Analysis

The statistical software SPSS 16.0 was used for the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The descriptive statistics of the data provided the number of respondents, the mean, median, and mode as well as the range of the scores and standard deviation for all items in the survey instrument. To examine if there were associations between the variables, the Pearson correlation coefficient was utilized for the data analyses in the study. Pearson's correlation analysis examines the existence, strength, and direction of the linear relationships between two variables. Pearson correlation coefficients (r) have values that range from -1 to 1. The negative sign in front of the number signifies a negative correlation while no sign indicates a positive relationship. The size of the absolute value signifies the strength of the relationship. According to Salkind (2011), an absolute correlation coefficient between .20 and .40 is a weak relationship, an absolute correlation between .40 and .60 is a moderate relationship, .60 to .80 is a strong relationship and .80 to 1.0 is a very strong relationship.

The correlation tests examined the strength of the variables in this study to determine if any of the hypothesized relationships were confirmed and whether the relationships were statistically significant. Some of the other correlational analysis tested relationships that compared differences among gender and race/ethnicity groups. Males and females were analyzed separately as well as Caucasians and non-Caucasians to

ascertain how much variation there was between the relationships in the aforementioned subpopulations.

RESULTS

The current study utilized survey data from state governmental employees working at a behavioral health and addiction agency in Oklahoma. The results of the study showed that the hypothesized conceptual model received support when looking at the data obtained from a sample of 372 respondents. These data support underlying assumptions that managerial coaching is statistically and practically associated with employee outcome variables identified in the study.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the sample. In the demographic variable of gender, female respondents largely outnumbered *(n=278, 75%)* male respondents *(n=93, 25%)*. The largest ethnic/racial group of respondents were white/Caucasian *(n=277, 75%)* followed by black/African-American *(n=30, 8%)* respondents. The remaining 17% were representatives from other ethnic groups.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

	N=372	*%*
Gender		
Male	93	25.00
Female	278	74.73
Transgender	1	.27
Ethnicity/Race	*N=368*	
White/Caucasian	277	75.27
African American	30	8.15
Hispanic	9	2.45
Asian	11	2.99
American Indian	23	6.25
Two or More Races	15	4.08
Other	3	0.82

Professional Characteristics

Regarding organizational tenure a little over 74% of employees have worked for the organization within the 0 to 11 years range. There were 51.48% of respondents who reported fewer than five (5) years of service in the organization while 22.64% have been employed 6 to 11 years. Approximately 75% of respondents worked in state facilities providing direct care services; the remaining 25.41% of job positions were located at the agency's central office. The majority of respondent job positions involved direct clinical care at 42%, while 33% of the respondents worked as support staff. The remaining 24% of the respondents held management positions. Although the question asking the manager's gender was optional it is worth mentioning respondents' reported that 77% of their immediate supervisors were female.

Results of the Pearson Correlation Analysis

The correlations of managerial coaching, role clarity and turnover intention were examined. The correlation coefficients of the Pearson's values are provided in tables two through four. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the measurement items.

As shown in Table 2, all eight Managerial Coaching questions were significantly

correlated to the Managerial Coaching variable.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation of Managerial Coaching

MC	Q11_1	Q11_2	Q11_3	Q11_4	Q11_5	Q11_6	Q11_7	Q11_8	MC
Uses examples (Q11_1)	1 N=372								
Broadens perspective (Q11_2)	.795** .000 N=370	1 370							
Provides feedback (Q11_3)	.721** .000 N=371	.849** .000 369	1 371						
Helpful interactions (Q11_4)	.710** .000 N=371	.819** .000 369	.871** .000 370	1 371					
Performs job effectively (Q11_5)	.550** .000 N=370	.561** .000 368	.562** .000 369	.564** .000 369	1 370				
Asks questions (Q11_6)	.640** .000 N=369	.718** .000 367	.706** .000 368	.728** .000 368	.549** .000 367	1 369			
Sets expectation (Q11_7)	.668** .000 N=370	.734** .000 368	.760** .000 369	.750** .000 369	.554** .000 368	.693** .000 367	1 370		
Role plays (Q11_8)	.550** .000 N=370	.525** .000 368	.507** .000 369	.528** .000 369	.536** .000 368	.591** .000 367	.565** .000 368	1 370	370
Coaching	.839** .000 N=372	.899** .000 370	.896** .000 371	.895** .000 371	.725** .000 370	.844** .000 369	.853** .000 370	.710** .000 370	1 376

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

All six role clarity questions were significantly correlated to the role clarity variable

(Table 3). With regards to question four "I have to 'feel my way' in performing my

duties" it showed a negative correlation compared to the other role clarity questions.
The reason behind this is the more certain an individual is about his or her authority, job
goals, responsibilities and expectations the less (negative) he or she has to figure out
how to perform their job duties.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Role Clarity

RC	Q12_1	Q12_2	Q12_3	Q12_4	Q12_5	Q12_6	RC
Authority (Q12_1)	1						
	N=371						
Clear goals (Q12_2)	.631**	1					
	.000						
	N=370	370					
Knows responsibility (Q12_3)	.428**	.521**	1				
	.000	.000					
	N=371	370	371				
"Feel way" thru performing job duties (Q12_4)	**-.173****	**-.285****	**-.175****	1			
	.001	.000	.001				
	N=369	368	369	369			
Knows expectations (Q12_5)	.553**	.710**	.653**	**-.271****	1		
	.000	.000	.000	.000			
	N=370	369	370	368	370		
Clarity (Q12_6)	.481**	.590**	.633**	**-.252****	.717**	1	

	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N=370	369	370	368	369	370	
Role Clarity	.761**	.812**	.742**	**-.024**	.847**	.777**	1
	.000	.000	.000	.646	.000	.000	
	N=371	370	371	369	370	370	376

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

As indicated in Table 4, all three turnover intention questions were significantly correlated with the turnover intention variable.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation of Turnover Intention

Turnover Intention	Q13_1	Q13_2	Q13_3	Turnover Intention
Quitting job (Q13_1)	1			
	N=372			
Actively searching (Q13_2)	.838**	1		
	.000			
	N=372	372		
Leave the organization (Q13_3)	.807**	.812**	1	
	.000	.000		
	N=371	371	371	
Turnover Intention	.941**	.941**	.929**	1
	.000	.000	.000	
	N=372	372	371	376

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

The Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to test the three hypothesized relationships, the indirect relationship of managerial coaching and turnover intention, the direct relationship of managerial coaching and role clarity, and the direct relationship of role clarity on turnover intention. A p-value greater than .01 was used as the criterion statistic to determine if the relationship was significant. As illustrated in

Table 5, the results of the Pearson correlation coefficient testing indicate that the data

support Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix of Variables

	Turnover Intention	Managerial Coaching	Role Clarity
Turnover Intention	1 N=376		
Managerial Coaching	**-.439**[**] .000 N=376	1 376	
Role Clarity	**-.210**[**] .000 N=376	**.603**[**] .000 376	1 376

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

Figure 2. Results of the Conceptual Model of Managerial Coaching Outcomes
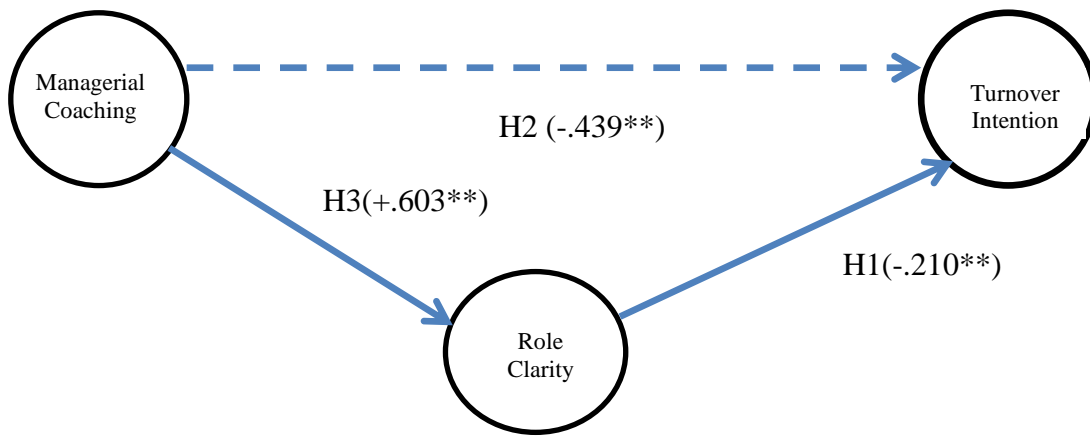
Significant path (at the .01 level) → – – →

As stated in *hypothesis 1*, *there will be a direct negative relationship between*

employee role clarity and turnover intention, was supported by the study sample. There

was a statistically significant and negative correlation between role clarity and turnover

intention at -.210. Meaning, employees with high role clarity also had low turnover

intention. However, the strength of the association between the two variables was

weak, which suggests there may be other contributory factors impacting an employee's

intentions to quit.

As stated in *hypothesis 2, there will be an indirect negative relationship between*

perceived managerial coaching behavior and turnover intention. This relationship will

be mediated through role clarity. This relationship was supported by the study sample.

Managerial coaching was found to directly impact employee role clarity and indirectly

influence turnover intention thru role clarity. The findings showed role clarity, as a

direct outcome of managerial coaching, had a direct influence on turnover intention.

The correlation between managerial coaching and turnover intention was statistically

significant and negatively related at -.439. The strength of the association between the

two variables is moderate.

Hypothesis 3 was supported by the study sample. It was hypothesized that, *there*

will be a direct positive relationship between perceived managerial coaching behavior

and role clarity. Previous research has indicated that role clarity is positively impacted

by managerial coaching. As shown in table 4, managerial coaching did have a

statistically significant and positive relationship with role clarity at .603. The strength

of the association between the two variables is strong. Hypothesis 3 is consistent with

results from earlier studies, indicating when managers provide feedback to employees it

helps to develop his or her self-awareness at work, and subsequent clarity in regards to

job goals and work responsibilities (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Peterson & Hicks,

1996).

The relationships between managerial coaching and role clarity as well as managerial coaching and turnover intention have been tested in earlier studies (Har, 2008; Kim, 2014; Park, 2007; Park, Yang & McLean; 2008). These present study findings are in line with anticipated results from relevant earlier literature on these relations. The findings of the current study suggest employees who perceived their manager supported them through coaching were clearer about job roles and responsibilities and, had fewer intentions to leave the organization than other employees who perceived that their manager did not support them through coaching. Employees who perceived that their manager did not provide support via coaching might be unclear or more confused with job roles, thus more likely to quit.

The results of the aforementioned hypotheses highlight sameness among the different gender and racial/ethnic groups. As summarized in Table 6, managerial coaching had a strong, statistically significant and positive bearing on role clarity among males at .770 and that role clarity had a statistically significant and negative effect on turnover intention at -.292.

Table 6: Findings and/or Testing Hypotheses for Male Respondents

Male	Turnover Intention	Managerial Coaching	Role Clarity
Turnover Intention	1 N=93		
Managerial Coaching	-.477[**] .000 N=93	1 93	
Role Clarity	**-.292**[**] .004 N=93	**.770**[**] .000 93	1 93

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

Table 7 shows that, within the female population, there was a moderate, statistically significant and positive relationship between managerial coaching and role clarity at .460. In addition, role clarity had a weak, statistically significant and negative relationship on turnover intention at -.383. Notably, the correlation between managerial coaching and role clarity is statistically more significant in the male population at .770 than the female population at .460.

Table 7: Findings and/or Testing Hypotheses for Female Respondents

Female	Turnover Intention	Managerial Coaching	Role Clarity
Turnover Intention	1 N=278		
Managerial Coaching	-.567** .000 N=278	1 278	
Role Clarity	**-.383** .000 N=278	**.460** .000 278	1 278

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

Table 8: Findings and/or Testing Hypotheses for Caucasian Respondents

Caucasian	Turnover Intention	Managerial Coaching	Role Clarity
Turnover Intention	1 N=277		
Managerial Coaching	**-.553** .000 N=277	1 277	
Role Clarity	**-.387** .000 N=277	.532** .000 277	1 277

Tables 8 and 9 summarize the results of the hypothesized correlations among the racial/ethnic subgroups. In general, there was little variation between the Caucasian and Non-Caucasian respondents. Table 8 shows that there was a weak, statistically significant and negative relationship between role clarity and turnover intention at -.387. Though statistically significant, the correlation was weaker among the Non-Caucasian group at -.208. In addition, there was a moderate, statistically significant and negative relationship between managerial coaching and turnover intention at -.553. The relationship was less moderate at -.470 for Non-Caucasians.

Table 9: Findings and/or Testing Hypotheses for Non-Caucasian Respondents

Non-Caucasian	Turnover Intention	Managerial Coaching	Role Clarity
Turnover Intention	1 N=91		
Managerial Coaching	**-.470**[**] .000 N=91	1 91	
Role Clarity	**-.208**[*] .048 N=91	.556[**] .000 91	1 91

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

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

DISCUSSION

There is little extant scholarly literature on the topic of managerial coaching, specifically in the area of intervening factors. In response, this current investigation examined the direct and indirect effects of perceived managerial coaching behavior on employee role clarity and turnover intention among employees of a state governmental agency. Of particular interest was examining the mediating effect of role clarity on the relationship between perceived managerial coaching behaviors and turnover intention. It was proposed that managerial coaching is significantly and positively related to employee role clarity and significantly and negatively related to turnover intention via role clarity. It was also proposed that role clarity is significantly and negatively related to turnover intention. Existing studies point out the mediating influence of role clarity on relationships between managerial coaching and select employee work-related outcomes; however, turnover intention has not been examined. No prior research, to this author's knowledge, has looked at the mediating effect role clarity has on the relationship between perceived managerial coaching and turnover intention.

The results of this study demonstrated that the proposed hypothesized conceptual model was supported by the empirical data of the current study sample. As anticipated, the current study affirms previous related studies (Kim, 2014) that managerial coaching behavior has a significant and positive connection to employees' role clarity. In the current study, results showed that role clarity has a statistically significant, negative correlation to turnover intention and managerial coaching had an indirect impact on turnover intention through the mediating influence of role clarity. While the results of these hypotheses add to the literature, the key contribution of this study comes from

investigating the intervening influence of role clarity on turnover intention. This author is unaware of any other study of this kind to have been conducted. Though evident role clarity had a statistically significant influence on turnover intention, the strength of the relationship was weak. Unexpectedly, findings revealed managerial coaching had the stronger impact on turnover intention. The data results also indicated that there was minor variation between the different gender and race/ethnic populations. According to the findings, the role clarity for males was more positively impacted by managerial coaching than it was for females.

Implications for Practice

The results of the current research have practical implications to help human resource (HR) practitioners maximize their management and leadership effectiveness in organizations. In addition, general recommendations are provided and discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, the results of the present study provide empirical support for the potential advantages of managerial coaching in organizations. Organizations are recognizing the influence managers' behavior has on shaping the attitude and behavior of employees. This research reinforced the notion that managerial coaching has a significant influence on employee work-related outcomes such as role clarity and turnover intention. Most of the respondents in this study perceived coaching behaviors in his or her supervisor and as a result had a clearer understanding of their job role. According to research (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Kim, 2014; Kim, Egan, Kim & Kim, 2013; Rizzo et al., 1970) role clarity gained through managerial support improves job satisfaction, work commitment, job performance, and retention. In the present study,

the intervening variable of role clarity generates important insights that show the relationship between managerial coaching and turnover intention is enhanced when employees have a clear understanding of his or her job role. For example, respondents who rated themselves as having higher role clarity also had lesser intentions to quit.

Second, the results of the current study provide the basis for managerial coaching as an effective management and leadership behavior. This finding is in keeping with earlier studies that showed managerial coaching as an effective approach that empowers employees to learn and develop (Kim, Egan, Kim & Kim, 2013). Prior research (Ellinger et. al., 2010; Gilley, Gilley & Kouider, 2010; Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie, 2009; Kim, 2014) has shown evidence of positive work-related outcomes as a result of managerial coaching such as job performance, role clarity, employee development, motivation, working relationships, job satisfaction, and career and organizational commitment.

Finally, the present study offers a richer picture of the impact of and potential for managerial coaching practices in organizations. Results not only assist managers to understand the consequences of their managerial action on employee role clarity and turnover intentions, but also to identify and focus on coaching behaviors to maximize their management and leadership effectiveness. Though the results affirmed that most employees perceived his or her supervisor exhibited coaching behaviors. There were findings that also revealed some respondents did not observe coaching behaviors in his or her manager. This finding could suggest that managers who neglect to coach may have disparaging attitudes about coaching or are unwilling to coach due to workplace constraints (McLean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert & Larkin, 2005). Managers may also be

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apprehensive to coach because they themselves have never been coached or lack the capability or confidence (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Overcoming potential barriers to effective coaching such as managers' attitudes, agency policies and time constraints should be addressed as they may preclude coaching of employees from having full effect.

Although uncertainties exists as to the efficacy of managerial coaching (Park, 2007), the findings from this current study empirically confirm that managerial coaching produces a clearer understanding of employees' job role, and as a result, employees have lesser intentions to quit their organization (Bertelli, 2007).

HR practitioners can employ managerial coaching for employee development and for management and leadership development. Longenecker and Nuebert (2005) contend that while training mangers in coaching skills is a good first step it is not sufficient in creating a culture supportive of coaching. HR practitioners desiring to implement managerial coaching in their agency should consider designing a systematic leadership development training program where managerial coaching competencies and behaviors are taught and reinforced. This strategy could be advantageous in enhancing coaching skills and guiding managers to lead effectively. Providing a range of approaches to help motivate, encourage and prevent managers from reverting to the antiquated management mind set may also be beneficial. Such as, making available continuous learning opportunities and creating an ongoing supportive network where managers themselves can receive coaching supervision may help to embed and sustain a managerial coaching culture within the organization (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). In addition, creating a reward system that provides recognition for managers who develop

employees via coaching could be an essential motivational component to cultivate a coaching culture (McLean et. al, 2005).

Limitations of the study

While the current study provides significant findings and implications, there were a number of limitations that should be addressed. Three limitations of particular importance are noted in the following paragraphs.

First, the data collected was from a single agency in the public sector and not generally representative of other industries or organizations. The use of a convenience sample of one state governmental agency limits the generalizability of the findings in the current study. Evidence has shown through comparative studies that there are cultural distinctions between organizations in the private and public sectors. Because the respondents of the current study were state governmental employees, they may have different attitudes or expectations when it comes to their perceptions about coaching, role clarity and turnover intentions in comparison to other employees who work in private, for-profit and non-profit organizations or even in other state governmental entities. Future studies should be conducted in various organizational types representing diverse populations to observe whether the hypothesized model and study findings can be replicated in varied business settings. In addition, a random sampling design should be considered in future studies to ensure results are reliable. Because findings of this study only represent employees who completed the survey those respondents may represent disgruntled employees who took the survey as a means to grieve. Whereas, employees who are highly engaged may likely took the survey for the benefit of their organization. Because survey results are not generalizable to this

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agency or state government employees overall, interpretations should be used cautiously.

A second limitation of this study is that the data was self-reported. Because the data reported were based on the self-perceptions of the respondents and not on objective measures, there might be a difference in the findings between the perceptions and realities of the respondents that may invite concern about attribution bias. For instance, perceptual, highly subjective data regarding managerial behaviors may be wrong or based on inaccurate or incomplete information (Bandura, 1989). For example, respondents' degree of involvement with their managers or the impact of managerial actions on them personally may have influenced his or her opinions and subsequent ratings. Thus, findings may be unclear concerning the effectiveness of managerial coaching. In future studies other quantifiable measures such as managers rating their own coaching behavior and a customer satisfaction survey could also be used to evaluate managerial coaching.

A third limitation is that the Coaching Behaviors Inventory scale used to measure managerial coaching only measures behaviors, which provides only a single dimension of managerial coaching. It was selected for this study because it is a popular scale, widely used in other managerial coaching studies. Diverging frames of thought on managerial coaching exists within the literature. Some researchers (McLean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert & Larkin, 2005; Park, McLean & Yang, 2008)), argue that managerial coaching cannot be described simply as a set of behaviors but also includes attitudes or beliefs that support a coaching mentality. Conversely, other scholars consider managerial coaching as a behavior indicator (Ellinger & Bostram, 1999). Although

there is disagreement in the literature on what managerial coaching looks like, future studies should consider employing a more comprehensive scale such as the Measurement Model of Coaching Skills developed by McLean et al. (2005) to completely measure both behavior and skill.

CONCLUSION

Retaining employees is one of the highest challenges in state governmental agencies. With limited budgets and scarce resources, money cannot be unnecessarily spent on excessive turnover costs. Reducing high employee turnover should be a top priority for state governmental HR practitioners and administrators. Before turnover occurs employees typically make plans to leave, this is considered turnover intention. Identifying factors that may impact turnover intention could help to reduce actual turnover. Therefore, in an attempt to reduce losing capable employees HR professionals must develop strategies to retain its workforce.

Managerial coaching is an approach that has shown to yield favorable outcomes both on the employee and organizational levels (Hagen, 2012). Research shows that employees' intentions to leave their organization are reduced when coached by a manager. Prior research shows a correlation between managerial coaching and turnover intention; however, the literature lacks empirical studies that examine intervening factors that may be influencing the relationship. Studies have examined managerial coaching behavior and the intervening variable of role clarity on select work-related outcomes; however, turnover intention was not observed. In response, this author endeavored to investigate the relationships of managerial coaching on role clarity and turnover intention with emphasis on the mediating impact of role clarity on turnover

intention. The current study affirmed results from previous studies that showed role

clarity is positively impacted by managerial coaching. Additionally, the present study

found that role clarity enhances the relationship between managerial coaching and

turnover intention, which is a key contribution to the literature.

   Because managerial coaching is a relatively new area of study there is a paucity of

research. More empirically robust and relevant studies are needed to provide scholars

and practitioners with an evidenced-base in which to support coaching within the

managerial context. The current study is not completely exhaustive regarding a holistic

view of managerial coaching. Therefore, future research should aim to exam other

antecedents, relations and outcomes, building greater knowledge that managerial

coaching as an effective leadership approach produce good employee outcomes (Hagen,

2012). This study should provide the rationale for HR practitioners and leaders in state

governmental agencies that managerial coaching as an organizational strategy can

potentially develop supervisors, increase role clarity in employees and improve

retention in their organizations.

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