Effectiveness of management development in Pakistani corporate sector

Testing the D'Netto model

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess effectiveness of management development (MD) programs in the Pakistani corporate sector and investigate relationship among various factors that affect MD practices in Pakistan.

Design/methodology/approach – The research employed a blend of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. D'Netto's model of "MD effectiveness" provided a framework for measuring MD effectiveness. The sample consisted of managers from 55 corporate branches of 20 banks and three telecom organizations using a "self-reported rating" survey questionnaire and interviews, which resulted in 102 completed responses and ten in-depth interviews.

Findings – Although Pakistani managers have a positive attitude towards MD, yet little attention has been paid to create a strong link between corporate strategy and MD. Properly planned MD programs and relevant course contents are necessary for the effectiveness of MD. D'Netto's model of "management development effectiveness" has a good fit and is applicable to the corporate sector in Pakistan.

Research limitations/implications – As a qualitative study, there are limitations on account of generalization of findings. Further research is recommended.

Practical implications – Top management should assign higher priority to MD. MD programs should be properly planned, executed, monitored and evaluated. Utilization of newly learned skills, risk taking and new ideas should be encouraged. The reward system needs revising and a continuous learning environment ought to be established for effective MD in Pakistan.

Originality/value – This study, for the first time, assessed the current state of MD in Pakistan and contributes to the present stock of knowledge and understanding of the subject by contextualising the concept of "management development effectiveness" in the Pakistani corporate sector.

Keywords Pakistan, Management development, Banks, Corporate strategy, Telecommunications industry, Effectiveness, Top management, Corporate sector organizations

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Today the industrial nations of the world face enormous challenges and opportunities. The business environment is turning more and more volatile and competition is growing stronger. In such an environment capable and talented managers are crucial to organizations' success in gaining and sustaining a competitive advantage (Kirwan and Birchall, 2006). The need for good managers is greater than ever. The development of these managers is traditionally the domain of management development (MD) (Vloeberghs, 1998). Desimone *et al.* (2002) define MD as "an organizations' conscious effort to provide its managers (and potential managers) with opportunities to learn,

grow and change, in hopes of producing over the long term cadre of managers with the skills necessary to function effectively in that organization." In the early years of the activity, MD was generally seen as an extension to succession planning. The successor or a candidate had to be trained for the next post, the criteria for which often emphasized formal qualifications such as professional experience and education (Vloeberghs, 1998). But now this view has given way to a more developed one, which links MD with overall management of an organization.

Brown (2005) argues that for more than 15 years it has been contended that MD has a strategic role to play in organizations. MD should be an integral part of strategic plans and strategic change. In several recent articles, the enduring successful performance of winning companies has been explained by their ability to make MD a central means of doing business (Fulmer *et al.*, 2000). This means that in these companies a close linkage between MD and strategic management has been successfully formed and retained over time.

Benefits of effective MD are prevalent in past research. The Pakistan Institute of Management was established by the Government of Pakistan in 1954 to promote MD in the country. MD programs are integral part of overall development plans of all the progressing organizations in Pakistan. However, traditional Pakistani organizations have been criticized for their passivity, bureaucratic and hierarchical cultures, in these organizations turnover is high and organizational commitment is low (Khilji, 2002). Khilji (2002) in her study has also concluded that managers are ready to depart from traditional organizational cultures and practices, despite the fact that not all organizations are. One possible reason of the poor quality of Pakistani organizations may be the ineffectiveness of MD. So far no comprehensive research or study has been carryout to measure the effectiveness of MD in Pakistani organizations. In this study we conducted a comprehensive analysis of key aspects of MD in Pakistani organizations and tried to fill the gap in literature available from Pakistan.

2. Nature of MD effectiveness
D'Netto *et al.* (2008) defined MD effectiveness as "extent to which management development programs have yielded desired outcomes." Effective MD enhances organizational performance, achieving its goals and it will lead to beneficial outcomes for the organization (Meldrum and Atkinson, 1998). Organization also benefits from higher productivity, lower absenteeism and better customer services (D'Netto *et al.*, 2008). Prime purpose of MD is effective managerial behavior (Mumford, 1994). MD programs help organization grow and adjust to changing environmental and business circumstances (Meldrum and Atkinson, 1998). Effective MD should results in higher job satisfaction, lower turnover, less stress resulting from skill inadequacies, preparing employees and managers for greater responsibilities, more awareness and helping them to manage their own and others' careers.

2.1 Evolution models
A few theoretical models of MD have been put forward in the literature. These models focus on linkage between strategic management and MD. A detailed discussion of these models or studies is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the main contributions are summarized as following.

Burgoyne (1988) and Mumford and Gold (1993) presented their models to clarify the anatomy of the strategic linkage. Burgoyne's model describes an evolutionary logic, which leads gradually from a practically non-existent relationship to the most

powerful integration between strategic management and MD. The model includes six levels of maturity that organizations tend to follow when they seek to strengthen MD's role as a strategic activity:

- Level 1: no systematic MD;
- Level 2: isolated, tactical MD;
- Level 3: integrated and co-ordinated structural and developmental tactics;
- Level 4: an MD strategy input to corporate policy;
- Level 5: MD strategy input to corporate policy formation; and
- Level 6: strategic development of the management of corporate policy.

Mumford and Gold (1993) identifies three basic approaches that organizations utilize when managing MD in relation to their strategic purposes.

- *Type 1*: "informal managerial," includes accidental learning processes, which occur naturally in connection with (other) key managerial activities. MD is understructure in development terms and does not have clear development objectives.
- *Type 2*: "integrated managerial," refers to opportunistic processes where natural managerial activities are structured in such a way as to make use of the already available learning opportunities. MD activities are planned beforehand and/or subsequently reviewed as learning experiences.
- *Type 3*: "formalized development," means planned learning processes, which take place away from normal managerial activities. MD interventions have clear development objectives and they are based on explicit intention.

Luoma (2004) presented his model based on the above two existing models. His three-stage model distinguishes between concrete stages of development and organizes them so that they reflect the progress toward higher-level integration between strategic management and MD.

Sporadic MD (Levels 1 and 2, Type 1): MD is uncoordinated and the target setting is vague. Line organization ownership of MD initiatives is weak. The content of MD is only loosely coupled with specific development needs or future aspirations of the organization. Learning benefits individuals rather than the organization.

Reactive MD (Levels 2 and 3, Type 3): MD is used as a response to identified problems or anticipated failures in performance. MD follows technological, financial or product/market-related considerations of strategy. There is some consistency in various MD initiatives, which represent mainly formal learning. MD is designed to benefit the organization rather than individuals.

Integrative MD (Levels 4-6, Type 2): various MD initiatives, formal and non-formal, form an integrated whole. MD focusses on the key elements of current strategy and/or addresses previously unidentified solutions or problems, which might lead to novel strategies. MD's input to business strategy is sought intentionally. MD benefits both individuals and the organization.

Mumford (1994) presented effective MD as based first on an awareness of effective managerial behavior. Second, awareness of effective learning process must be a prime constituent. Third, development is most likely to arise from real work rather from abstract knowledge or even simulation of real work. The triangle is equilateral: this means that all three aspects are equally important. The point, literally, of this

effectiveness triangle is that the purpose of MD is not to have a particular kind of development. Nor even to provide an effective learning process, but that these two both focus on and are pointed toward effective managerial behavior. As Mumford (1994) argues that the triangle gives emphasis to the desired end conclusion-effective managerial behavior.

All these models and work done by McClelland (1994), Brown (2005) and Berry (1990) focus on linking the MD to strategic management. However, these models possess shortcomings in term of their completeness because these studies do not focus on variables or factors associated with MD effectiveness.

2.2 D'Netto model
One other model that focusses on the MD effectiveness by examining relationships of constructs from previous empirical research is that of D'Netto *et al.* (2008). The strength of D'Netto model is its comprehensiveness and its usability in MD contexts. This model comprehensively analyzes the key factors associated with MD and the strength of relationships of all those variables as shown in Figure 1. Cascio (2003) and Stone (2005) proposed a three-stage approach to MD that involves assessment of development needs, conducting the development program and evaluating the program. Based on this staged approach D'Netto *et al.* (2008) build their model, their model focussed on variables of first and third stages of the MD process. Variables included in the model are organizational learning culture, individual initiative, top management support, link to corporate strategy, post-program evaluation, line manager support and opportunities for skill utilization (see Figure 1). D'Netto *et al.* (2008) hypothesized 14 paths to have positive coefficients. Results of their study was in consonance with past research on training and development (Chiaburu and Marinova, 2005; Tharenou, 2001; Tracey *et al.*, 2001) and all the predicted path coefficients were significant and in the expected direction. D'Netto *et al.* (2008) found that organizational learning culture plays a vital and basic role in the MD process, and is positively associated with top
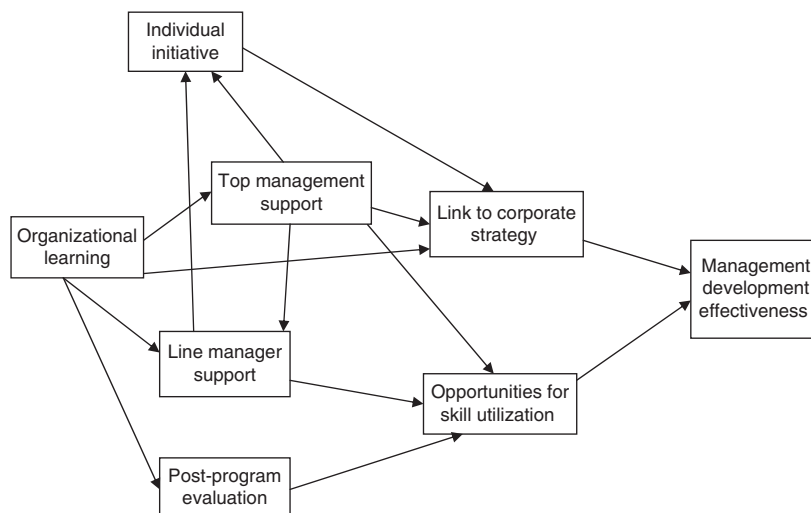

Figure 1.
D'Netto model of
management development
effectiveness

Source: D'Netto *et al.* (2008)

management support, line manager support and post-program evaluation. They found that employees at all levels in the organization take MD seriously if strong top and line management support is available. Results of D'Netto *et al.* (2008) also emphasize that to be effective, MD must be linked to corporate strategy, it must be systematic, and organizations must allow managers to apply skills learned in development programs which means they found a direct positive association between opportunities for skill utilization, corporate strategy and MD effectiveness.

3. Purpose of the study
The purpose of the study was to test the D'Netto model of MD in Pakistani corporate sector. Testing was comprised investigating whether or not the factors and their relationships exist in practice here in Pakistan. This study enhanced the generalizability of the D'Netto findings and also supported the past research on training and development. Literature on MD from Pakistan is rare to find, this research also tried to fill this gap in literature. This research specifically measured MD effectiveness, assessed the current state of MD in Pakistan and identifies ways in which MD can be made more effective in Pakistani corporate sector.

4. Research process
4.1 Sample and procedure of data collection
We conducted our study in telecom and banking sectors of Pakistan. So the population of our research was all managers working in all banks and telecom companies situated in Rawalpindi/Islamabad. A total of 120 managers were randomly selected as the research sample. We conducted structured interviews that were focussed on variables of our interest with ten senior managers and each interview lasted appropriately 30 minutes. A semi-structured questionnaire for managerial levels developed by D'Netto *et al.* (2008), was also used to collect data from participants. We personally met all participants and requested them to participate in the study and delivered questionnaires to fill up. A total of 120 questionnaires were delivered and we personally collected 108 filled questionnaires, a response from managers employed by 55 corporate branches of 20 banks and three telecom organizations. After excluding the cases that had missing data and outliers a total of 102 useable questionnaires were finally obtained for research, yielding a response rate of 85 percent. Sample characteristics are presented in Table I.

4.2 Scales to measure the D'Netto model
The instrument used for this study was development by D'Netto *et al.* (2008), which they used to measure MD effectiveness. All of scales were derived from the literature and were developed to assess factors affecting MD effectiveness.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. First section sought to collect demographic information. In second section respondents rated each of the question on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree through 7 = strongly agree). Last section was consisting of an open-ended question in which the respondents were asked their opinion regarding the issues related with effectiveness of MD. All respondents were asked to take their current organization into consideration while completing the questionnaire.

MD effectiveness: MD effectiveness was measured using a nine-item scale. An example item was "I perceive that management development has increased employee's motivation."

Sample size	102
Age	
Median age of respondents (years)	35.46
Gender	
Male (%)	81.2
Female (%)	18.8
Management level	
Senior vice presidents and CEOs (%)	2.0
Senior managers (%)	35.4
Middle managers (%)	38.8
Front line managers (%)	23.8
Management development programs attended	
One to two programs (%)	38.8
Three to four (%)	42.5
Five and more (%)	18.7
Mean per capita expenditure on training and development	
Rs.	9,435
US	$112

<div align="right">Table I.
Sample characteristics</div>

Organizational learning culture: organizational learning culture was measure using a seven-item scale. An example item was "My organization facilitate the learning and personal development of all employees."

Individual initiative: individual initiative was measured using a seven-item scale. An example item was "I take more responsibility and play an active role in planning my own management development."

Top management support: top management support was measured using a seven-item scale. An example item was "Top management supports management development."

Link to corporate strategy: link to corporate strategy was measured using a seven-item scale. An example item was "Management development programs goals are linked to corporate strategy."

Post-program evaluation: post-program evaluation was measured using a seven-item scale. An example item was "In my organization after completing management development program, evaluations are carried out."

Line manager support: line manager support was measured using a seven-item scale. An example item was "In my organization trainees can communicate easily with their managers regarding their management development."

Opportunities for skill utilization: opportunity for skill utilization was measured using a seven-item scale. An example item was "My organization provides me with opportunities to use my new knowledge and skills."

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed for all variables using SPSS. Table II shows the means, standard deviations and the intercorrelation matrix. Analysis of the intercorrelation matrix indicates that none of the correlations are above 0.72. Hence, the problem of multicollinearity is quite low. Results in the Table II indicate that none of the variables had high mean scores. MD effectiveness as a dependent variable had a mean score of 4.90 on a seven-point Likert scale; this indicates that quality of MD effectiveness is fairly low in Pakistan. Results of all independent variables indicate that

individual initiative and link to corporate strategy have highest mean score of 5.02, confirming the importance of individual's role for self-development and need of a strong corporate strategy support for MD programs. Organizational learning culture had a mean score of 4.87, the mean score for top management support was 4.62, and line manager support 4.78, post-program evaluation 4.62 and opportunity for skill utilization had a mean score of 4.79.

5.2 Examination of the model

To test the predicted D'Netto model of MD effectiveness, we conducted path analysis for our 14 hypothesized paths using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) program. AMOS will specify, estimate, assess and present the model in an intuitive path diagram to show hypothesized relationships among variables (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

The fit of the obtained model against the predicted model is tested using several indicators, including χ^2, χ^2/degree of freedom, comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and goodness of fit index (GFI). The observed model had a good fit with the predicted model. For recommended and obtained values of these indicators see Table III.

All the predicted paths were significant and in the expected direction (see Figure 2 for the standardize paths coefficients). Cheng (2001) argues that if model has achieved the recommended values of the goodness-of-fit measures and all or most of the hypothesized paths among the latent constructs are significant then the "best fitting" structural model is selected. We also draw some direct paths from independent variables to dependent variable to see the direct effects and rerun the path model. All these paths were none or less significant. Therefore, D'Netto model with these seven independent variables (see Figure 2) was accepted as the final and best-fitted model.

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Organizational learning culture	4.87	1.28	1.00							
2	Top management support	4.62	1.26	0.70	1.00						
3	Line manager support	4.78	1.24	0.52	0.55	1.00					
4	Individual initiative	5.02	0.84	0.48	0.60	0.58	1.00				
5	Link to corporate strategy	5.02	1.06	0.70	0.71	0.56	0.65	1.00			
6	Post-program evaluation	4.62	1.06	0.58	0.43	0.30	0.44	0.44	1.00		
7	Opportunity for skill utilization	4.79	1.22	0.55	0.64	0.72	0.46	0.52	0.60	1.00	
8	Management development effectiveness	4.90	1.05	0.54	0.53	0.47	0.50	0.67	0.38	0.51	1.00

Table II.
Means, standard deviations (SDs) and intercorrelation matrix

Indicator	Recommended values[a]	Obtained values
χ^2	–	23.56
p	$\geqslant 0.05$	0.05
χ^2/df	< 3	1.68
CFI	$\geqslant 0.90$	0.98
TLI	$\geqslant 0.90$	0.97
GFI	0 (poor fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit)	0.95
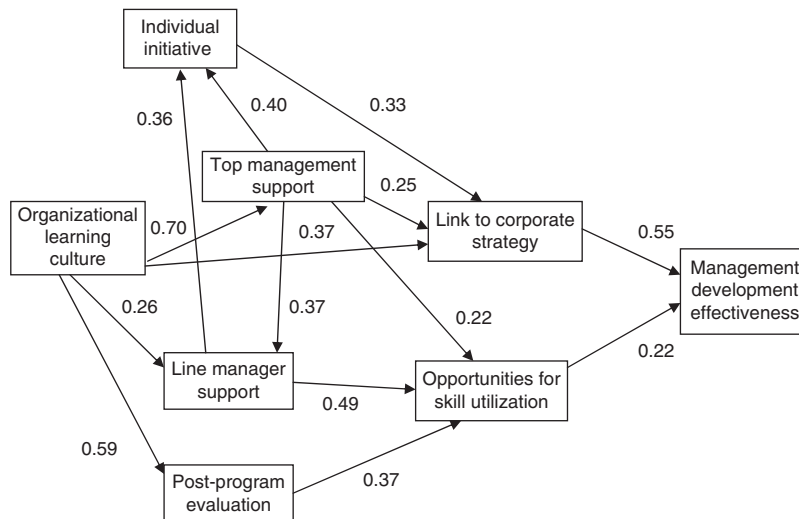
Table III.
Recommended and obtained values of overall goodness-of-fit measures

Source: [a]Hair *et al.* (2006)

5.3 Discussion

This study attempted to identify the predictors of MD effectiveness in Pakistani telecommunication and banking sectors. We employed the D'Netto model of MD effectiveness to achieve the study objectives. We collected data from 102 managers working in 55 branches of 20 banks and three telecom organizations. We analyzed data through path analysis using AMOS program. Results indicate that all the predicted path coefficients are significant and in the expected direction and D'Netto model has a good fit in Pakistani corporate environment. The results of our study are in consonance with past study on MD and training and development (D'Netto *et al.*, 2008; Tracey *et al.*, 2001; Chiaburu and Marinova, 2005).

We found that organizational learning culture is positively associated with the top management support, line manager support, post-program evaluation and link to corporate strategy. We also found that if an organization has a learning culture and top management support is strong then individuals at all levels accord more seriousness to MD. Results indicate that top management is positively correlated with line manager support and individual initiative. Individual initiative is enhanced if strong support from top and line manager is available. We also found a direct positive link between top management support and link to corporate strategy. Strategy formulation process can be enhanced if individuals at all levels play an active role in planning their MD and strong top management support is available. Strong top and line manager support is also positively associates with opportunity for skill utilizations. This indicates that opportunities to utilize newly learned skills are increased if top and line managers support the development activities. All the predictors in the study had mean scores of <5.02 on a seven-point Likert scale. We obtained per capita expenditure on training and development by dividing the total expenditure on training and development in all organizations by the number of employees working in those organizations. We found that the median per capita expenditure on training and development in Pakistan is only Rs. 9,435 (US$112) which is quite low. In developed countries like USA per capita expenditure on employee training and development is $1,068 (The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), 2009). Analysis of responses to the open-ended

question indicated that budget for training and development is not sufficient which adversely affect the quality of training programs and decrease the opportunities to utilize newly learned skills. Open-ended responses although indicated that managers have very positive attitude toward MD and are very optimistic about future of MD in Pakistan, yet respondents emphasized the need of more financial and emotional support from top management.

In our study we found a direct positive link between corporate strategy and MD effectiveness. As in past research works it is indicated that linking training and development goals to established corporate objectives is essential for training to assist an organization in meeting these objectives. However, analysis of responses to the open-ended questions indicated role of human resource (HR) department is of utmost importance yet Pakistani organizations lack the co-ordination between HR and management departments. HR departments have limited role and is not fully involved during strategic planning process, which is certainly a serious problem and affecting MD activities adversely. From open-ended questions we also found that participants demand for a more practical design of the MD programs and relevant program contents that help the participants to feel the MD program as an opportunity to learn. This study supports the past research on training and development. Properly planned training and development programs ensure success and return on investment (ROI) for training dollars (Chen and Sok, 2006).

Our results also indicate that learning organizations constantly evaluate their training and development activities and post-program evaluation is positively associated with opportunity for skill utilization. Mostly respondent indicated that there are follow up in workplace. But the focus of evaluation is not ROI oriented. We found opportunity for skill utilization directly associated with MD effectiveness, which indicates that the availability of facilities and opportunities in the workplace are essential for a successful transfer of training. Analysis of responses to the open-ended questions also indicated that for effective MD rewarding the employees is very necessary. In absence of reward and top management support trainees will feel themselves prisoners of the HR department and feel reluctant to participate in next session. They also indicated that for affective utilization of learned skills and knowledge, risk taking and using new ideas should be encouraged. They also indicated that training and development activities should proceed continuously over time to be more effective. Analysis of data also indicated that male domination of management jobs persists in Pakistan. Only 18.8 percent of our respondents were female. One explanation of this imbalance may be female managers are not getting sufficient training and development opportunities.

6. Implications for future research

There are several implications for the future research. The model we used for this study was developed by D'Netto *et al.* (2008). D'Netto model was based on first and third stage of the MD process. Researchers can consider all the three stages of MD process and can include variables of second stage in the model. Based on our findings and literature researchers can also increase or change the causal relationships among the model's constructs to increase its goodness of fit. Future research can use longitudinal data with more industries and increased sample size to test the model.

7. Limitations

Although this study led to some important results, several limitations should be noted. Our sample was very limited, including only 20 banks and three telecom organizations

situated in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. In addition the respondents were fairly young (see Table I) and had relatively limited job tenure. Generalizability of the findings of the study is reduced because the study was conducted in Pakistan only.

8. Conclusion

MD is playing its role as a strategic tool for organizations that enhances organizational performance. MD has been and will continue to be, a valuable tool for attracting and retaining talented employees. MD programs are integral part of overall development plans of all the progressing organizations in Pakistan. Pakistani organizations provide the best opportunities to their managers to learn and grow. Although participants of the study were very hopeful regarding bright future of MD in Pakistan yet the current quality of MD effectiveness is fairly low. To conclude, Pakistani organizations ask themselves these critical questions whose answers to which will greatly influence the quality of MD in Pakistani corporate sector:

- Do we have a proper learning culture where learning proceeds continuously over time, changing from the informal to the more formal modes?

- Do we have proper written documents which state our policy of MD?

- Does MD is fully systematic and reinforce the corporate strategy?

- Are our HR departments fully involved during strategic planning process?

- Do we provide proper opportunities to our trainees to utilize knowledge and skills gained through training in the workplace?

- Does our senior management give high priority to MD interventions and provide sufficient training and development budget and properly reward the trainees?

- Does our top and middle management ensure that MD programs are designed in such ways that meet the actual needs of our managers?

Pakistani organizations are experiencing large-scale changes in a very competitive environment. To be leaders in global economic race Pakistani organizations will have to create strong link between their MD efforts and their corporate strategies. Encouraging aspect of our research is that it broadly supports the work of D'Netto *et al.* (2008). D'Netto model of MD effectiveness has a good fit in Pakistani corporate sector and is an effective tool to measure the effectiveness of MD in Pakistani corporate sector. To enhance the return on training and development investments it is crucial to focus on MD effectiveness. As D'Netto *et al.* (2008) argue that only effective MD programs will justify a significant investment in management development.

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Further reading

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