Unlocking Positive Work Attitudes: The Power of Leadership and Coaching

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Abstract

Using the psychological capital theory from micro-coaching perspectives, this research examined the interactive effects of knowledge-oriented leadership and managerial coaching on employees' critical psychological states leading to positive work attitudes. A survey of 156 librarians, information managers, and library assistants from various public and private tertiary colleges in Punjab, Pakistan, was conducted using existing measures. Results revealed that knowledge-oriented leadership enhances critical psychological states (meaningfulness, safety, and availability), fostering positive work attitudes (creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement). Managerial coaching moderated these relationships, amplifying the effect of knowledge-oriented leadership on critical psychological states and cultivating more positive work attitudes, particularly for employees who received higher levels of coaching. The findings underscore the importance of employee-centered leadership and development approaches in enhancing the psychological capital of employees and their outcomes at work. The implications of these findings are discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the cornerstone of sustainable development and prosperity. In today's knowledge-based economies and societies, knowledge drives innovation and competitive advantage (Amarakoon et al., 2018; Le, 2024). Effective knowledge management enables innovation-based competitive strategies (S. Rehman et al., 2024; Salunke et al., 2019). The goal of civic education is to cultivate knowledgeable and responsible citizens for national development (Thelma, 2024). In this context, educational institutions must evolve into learning organizations, developing new knowledge and learning methods to meet market demands. However, public sector tertiary educational

institutions are often perceived as less innovative and competitive (Rahman et al., 2019), maybe due to an uninspiring psychological environment characterized by poor employee work attitudes, such as withdrawal behaviour (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), contributing to the decline in educational quality.

Libraries foster education and research (Ullah & Usman, 2023), with academic libraries being crucial for students' success (Thorpe et al., 2016). As knowledge institutions, libraries are key stakeholders in the educational system, which catalyses social and economic change. However, libraries require modern facilities, skilled staff, and a positive work environment to achieve desired outcomes rather than being mere book repositories (Popoola & Fagbola, 2023). To revitalize libraries and unlock their potential, it is essential to recognize the importance of librarians' professional services, provide them with meaningful work, and foster a supportive environment to nurture positive work attitudes (Ezeudu et al., 2024). Pakistan's National Education Policy (2017-2025) seeks to develop well-rounded individuals, instil morality, promote socio-economic development, and foster national harmony. It emphasizes establishing and improving library services in all educational institutions. However, these objectives will remain unachieved unless efforts are made to enhance critical psychological states and inculcate positive work attitudes among library professionals.

Positively engaged academic librarians are great research partners (Rabasa & Abrizah, 2024), who can help achieve national educational goals. Relational, collaborative leadership prioritizes fostering strong interpersonal connections and continuous learning to achieve success and drive growth in the workplace (Cota, 2024). Therefore, leadership and coaching are pivotal in facilitating responses to challenging contexts, enabling change, and driving high performance (Shoukry & Cox, 2018). This study draws upon psychological capital theory (PsyCap) and the micro-coaching perspective to explain how knowledge-oriented leadership and managerial coaching converge to boost critical psychological states and positive work attitudes among college library staff. This advances the application of PsyCap theory and micro-coaching in library and information management research with practical recommendations for the information and knowledge management professional.

2. LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES

A collaborative, reflective, and goal-cantered relationship between a leader and his subordinates is necessary to achieve the desired outcomes (Corbu et al., 2021). In this study, PsyCap Theory (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017) and micro-coaching perspectives (Castiello D'Antonio, 2018; van Zyl et al.,

2020) are integrated to understand the interactive effect of knowledge-oriented leadership and managerial coaching in harnessing employees' critical psychological states and promoting positive work attitudes. PsyCap theory suggests that individuals require psychological resources, such as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, to achieve goals and perform at high levels. It offers a comprehensive framework for understanding employee behaviour (Ting et al., 2024) and organizational outcomes (Birani-Nasraldin et al., 2024). Micro-coaching is a need-based collaborative relationship between the coach (leader) and coachee (employee) focused on discovering, cultivating, and applying personal resources to enhance positive states and facilitate personal and professional growth (Castiello D'Antonio, 2018; van Zyl et al., 2020). Given the time and cost constraints, micro-coaching is a useful technique that uses positive psychology principles (Biswas-Diener, 2009), allows the coaches to be conscious of his personal resources and provides the conditions for developing skills and abilities beyond the usual or prescribed professional roles.

2.1.   Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Positive Work Attitudes

Knowledge drives competitive organizational performance (Amarakoon et al., 2018; Le, 2024). Knowledge-oriented leadership combines transactional and transformational leadership approaches, focusing on effective knowledge management (Donate & de Pablo, 2015). Positive work attitudes, such as affective commitment (Allen et al., 1990), work engagement (Kahn, 1990), and creative self-efficacy (Tierney & Farmer, 2002) are precursors to a range of desirable outcomes. Organizations undertake measures to facilitate and promote positive work attitudes. Knowledge-oriented leaders naturally have a change mindset and want their subordinates to show higher work engagement (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). It fosters affective commitment and citizenship behaviour (H. Kim, 2014). It creates an ethically sound work environment (Loi et al., 2015), which emotionally attaches employees to their organization, creating loyalty (Mahdi et al., 2014). Work engagement is vital to`` employee well-being and organizational success (Saks, 2006). It has been linked to numerous beneficial outcomes, including reduced burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) and lower turnover rates (Saks, 2006). It enhances productivity, citizenship behaviour, and financial performance (Richman, 2006). It also fosters commitment, customer satisfaction (Saks, 2006), and innovative behaviour at work (Aryee et al., 2012). Self-efficacy is the degree of self-confidence that employees need to do tasks in a given work setting and cope with complex and innovative challenges (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). Knowledge-oriented leadership can improve employee attitudes, such as affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and work

engagement (Ahmed et al., 2024; Chughtai & Khan, 2024; Shamim et al., 2019), which improve knowledge management behaviour (Chughtai & Khan, 2024), and innovative performance at employee (Ahmed et al., 2024) and organizational levels (Chughtai & Khan, 2024).

2.2.   Mediating Role of Critical Psychological States

The psychological moods of employees influence team engagement and discretionary effort (Shuck et al., 2011). Psychological states of meaningfulness, safety, and availability predict work engagement and influence employee performance (Chikoko et al., 2014). Employees are more likely to be available (with the freedom to complete tasks with motivation, engagement, and productivity) when they believe their employment is meaningful and secure. For employees to perform to the best of their abilities, they must be thoroughly engaged (Asiwe et al., 2017). This calls for critical psychological states to promote a sense of purpose, security, and empowerment to improve job satisfaction, team cohesion, and organizational success. The influence of a knowledge-oriented leadership approach is profound, shaping positive outcomes in the workplace. When effectively implemented, this approach can significantly enhance motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction (Iranzadeh & Bahrami, 2013), which are critical precursors to innovative performance and organizational excellence (Taylor et al., 2019).

Knowledge-oriented leaders promote positive work attitudes, such as affective commitment, work engagement, and creative self-efficacy (Shamim et al., 2019). They drive organizational performance and success by fostering beneficial psychological states like meaningfulness, safety, and availability. However, the specific mechanisms that underpin these relationships, particularly in the context of college education and the library, are less understood. It is worth noting that most employee learning occurs in the workplace, where managerial coaching is an emerging approach to support and enhance learning and development processes (de Haan & Nilsson, 2023).

In line with the PsyCap Theory (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017), knowledge-oriented leadership can enhance employees' psychological states by implementing effective knowledge management practices, fostering participation, and creating a supportive work environment. This can lead to increased motivation, improved task performance, and potential future advancements (Iranzadeh & Bahrami, 2013), leading to positive work attitudes (Shamim et al., 2019) and innovative performance (Ahmed et al., 2024; Chughtai & Khan, 2024).

2.3.   Moderating Effect of Managerial Coaching

Employee outcomes are not solely determined by individual attributes but also by the interaction of situational elements (Shuck et al., 2011). In knowledge-intensive environments such as academic libraries, mentoring, and skills development opportunities can influence positive attitudes (Jayasingam & Yong, 2013). Employees expect their leaders to be actively involved in promoting and supporting knowledge management activities, providing guidance, and facilitating opportunities for growth and development (Bell DeTienne et al., 2004). Influential leaders in such organizations recognize the importance of creating an environment that encourages collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning, ultimately driving organizational success and competitiveness.

Knowledge-oriented leadership fosters a culture of knowledge-sharing, work engagement, and innovative work behaviour (Chughtai & Khan, 2024). It can also strengthen knowledge management practices (Shamim et al., 2019) that acknowledge and reward employees' efforts and capabilities (Chughtai & Khan, 2024; Ribière & Sitar, 2003). By embracing this approach, leaders can prevent counterproductive behaviours like knowledge hoarding, territorialism, and resistance to change, ultimately promoting a culture of knowledge sharing, transfer, and application (Lakshman, 2009). Instead, it fosters a culture of openness, collaboration, and trust, where employees feel encouraged to share their expertise and learn from one another, driving innovation and organizational growth.

Managerial coaching, when combined with knowledge-oriented leadership and applied effectively, can create a positive psychological climate that fosters employee engagement and discretionary effort and a more optimistic outlook for the organization's success (Shuck et al., 2011). This fosters a commitment to improving psychological engagement and empowerment (Al Nahyan et al., 2024; Mariam et al., 2020), innovative performance at individual and organizational levels (Ahmed et al., 2024; Al Nahyan et al., 2024; Chughtai & Khan, 2024). PsyCap Theory (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017) can help explain how coaching interventions implemented by knowledge-oriented leaders can enhance critical psychological states such as meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Coaching involves structured interactions, strategies, and techniques to drive sustainable change, benefiting the coaches and stakeholders (Cox et al., 2023).

Coaching-oriented leaders can enhance critical psychological states by fostering a supportive work environment and promoting knowledge management practices, increasing motivation, task performance, and future improvements

(Iranzadeh & Bahrami, 2013). Applying coaching principles in the workplace elevates employee engagement across all levels, confidence among leaders, and realization of employee potential (Crabb, 2011). By embracing a coaching approach, leaders can empower employees to take ownership, develop their skills, and reach their full potential to drive growth and success. The efficacy of coaching interventions in enhancing individual outcomes is substantially researched, suggesting that such interventions can facilitate a strengths-based approach, emotional regulation, and purpose-work alignment, culminating in improved happiness, well-being, engagement, and performance (Crabb, 2011).

Furthermore, leadership and management practices that incorporate developmental and coaching interventions, with a focus on strategic talent management, significantly influence employee engagement and discretionary effort (Lockwood, 2007). The adoption of a coaching-oriented leadership approach can foster a work environment characterized by psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability, thereby promoting positive work attitudes such as affective commitment, engagement, and self-efficacy (J. S. Kim et al., 2024; Ngo et al., 2024; Ribeiro et al., 2021; Viitala et al., 2023), contributing to a culture of engagement and growth (Edmondson, 2004). This, in turn, can positively impact organizational outcomes, highlighting the importance of coaching and leadership development in the modern workplace.

2.4.   Research Model and Hypotheses Statements

Effective knowledge management practices are crucial, as knowledge not applied has no value. Coaching and knowledge directories facilitate the application of knowledge in work settings. By promoting knowledge management practices and a supportive work environment, leaders oriented toward knowledge and coaching can enhance critical psychological states of meaningfulness, safety, and availability at work, ultimately leading to positive work attitudes (Shamim et al., 2019) and innovative performance outcomes (Ahmed et al., 2024; Chughtai & Khan, 2024). This study integrated the PsyCap Theory and micro-coaching perspective and conceptualized a model suggesting the interactive and synergistic effect of knowledge-oriented leadership (Ahmed et al., 2024; Chughtai & Khan, 2024; Mariam et al., 2022; Shamim et al., 2019) and managerial coaching (Al Nahyan et al., 2024; J. S. Kim et al., 2024; Mariam et al., 2019, 2020; Ngo et al., 2024; Ribeiro et al., 2021; Song & Li, 2024; Tanskanen et al., 2019; Viitala et al., 2023) can more effectively nurture critical psychological states and cultivate positive work attitudes. To empirically test this research model (Figure 1), this study has articulated and examined the following interactive hypotheses.
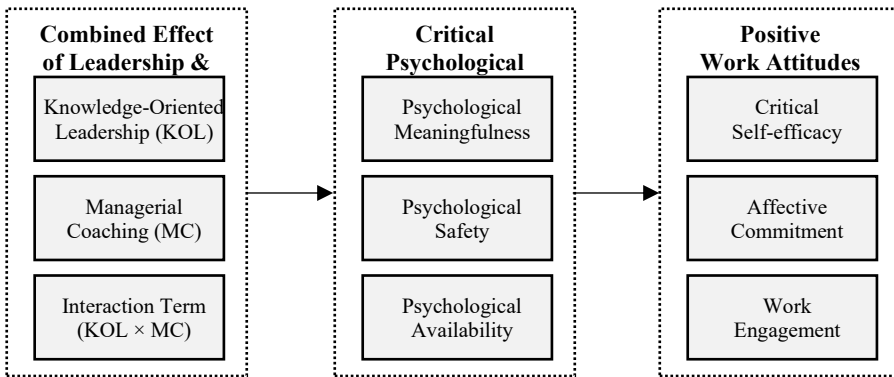
Figure 1: Combined effect model of knowledge-oriented leadership and coaching

Hypothesis 1: *As managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively fosters employees' psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability.*

Hypothesis 2: *As managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively cultivates creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement by fostering psychological meaningfulness at work.*

Hypothesis 3: *As managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively cultivates creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement by fostering psychological safety at work.*

Hypothesis 4: *As managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively cultivates creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement by fostering psychological availability at work.*

3.   METHODOLOGY

3.1.   Participants and Procedure

A cross-sectional field study was conducted to collect data on the study variables. This approach was chosen for its cost-effectiveness and efficiency in accessing participants, particularly in time-bound academic research projects. A total of 156 employees, comprising information managers, librarians, and library assistants from various public and private tertiary colleges in Punjab, Pakistan, participated in the study. This sample size was deemed sufficient, as researchers recommend 2 to 50 subjects per variable for accurate predictions (Austin & Steyerberg, 2015). The sample consisted of 68.6% male and 31.4% female participants, with the majority (66.0%) aged between 25-35 years, followed by 36-40 years (30.7%), and 46+ years (3.2%). The participants were highly educated, with 9% holding an MS/M.Phil. degree, 25.6% a master's degree, 54.5% a graduate degree, and 10.9% a diploma. They also had significant

experience in the field of library and information management, with 27.6% having 1-5 years of experience, 23.7% having 6-10 years, 15.4% having 11-15 years, 16.0% having 16-20 years, and 17.3% having 21+ years of experience.

3.2.   Measures

A survey instrument was created for this study using existing measurements for all variables, as described in the following sub-sections. In line with the literature, which suggests that more scale points indicate better psychometric properties (Joshi et al., 2015), a 7-point Likert scale was employed for the chosen measures. This scale is widely used in management research, considering it more effectively captures a range of responses.

3.3.   Knowledge-Oriented Leadership

Knowledge-oriented leadership (α=0.87) was measured using a 9-item measure (Donate & de Pablo, 2015). Sample items included, "In my organization, managers promote learning from experience and tolerate mistakes up to a certain point." Respondents rated the level to which their leaders demonstrated knowledge-oriented behaviors at work.

3.4.   Managerial Coaching

Managerial coaching (α=0.84) was evaluated using a 7-item measure (Tanskanen et al., 2019). Sample items included "My manager discusses our performance with us sufficiently." Respondents indicated the degree to which they have coaching from their leaders (managers) to guide their performance and development.

3.5.   Critical psychological states

Critical psychological states were measured using a 14-item measure (May et al., 2004), encompassing three dimensions: psychological meaningfulness (6 items, α = 0.87), psychological safety (3 items, α = 0.87), and psychological availability (5 items, α = 0.87), with example items including "My job activities, are personally meaningful to me", "I am not afraid to be myself at work", and "I am confident in my ability to think clearly at work", respectively. Respondents indicated the extent to which they feel that their work is meaningful, the working environment is safe, and the likeliness of their availability to engage in work tasks.

3.6.   Positive Work Attitudes

Employees' positive work attitudes were assessed using nine items comprising three dimensions: creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and

work engagement. Three items were used to measure creative self-efficacy (Tierney & Farmer, 2002), α=0.87), for example, "I feel that I am good at generating novel ideas"). Three items were used to assess affective commitment (Allen et al., 1990), α=0.87), for instance, "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization"). Three items were used to measure work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), α=0.87, for example, "I like to work intensely"). Respondents indicated the extent to which they exhibit creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and engagement at work.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Reliability and validity of measures

Harman's single-factor test was used to evaluate the possibility of common method bias. The findings showed that only 13% of the variance was explained by the single component, which is less than the 50% requirement. This implies there is little chance for the common method bias to pose a severe issue in this study. Table 1 displays scale means, factor loadings ranging between 0.52 and 0.81, average variance extracted (AVE>0.50), Cronbach's alpha (α>0.70), and composite reliability (CR>0.70) scores for each variable, which demonstrated adequate reliability and convergent validity of measures. Also, discriminant validity was established as shown in Table 2, where the square roots of AVEs for all variables exceeded their correlations with other variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and convergent validity

Construct/Variable	Items	Mean (SD)	Loadings	AVE	Alpha	CR
Knowledge-Oriented Leadership	9	5.53 (0.93)	0.52 < 0.82	0.63	0.87	0.90
Managerial Coaching	7	5.16 (1.48)	0.68 < 0.94	0.75	0.94	0.95
Psychological Meaningfulness	6	5.67 (0.87)	0.63 < 0.85	0.55	0.82	0.88
Psychological Safety	3	5.51 (0.80)	0.77 < 0.82	0.65	0.74	0.85
Psychological Availability	5	5.66 (0.79)	0.70 < 0.75	0.54	0.79	0.85
Creative Self-Efficacy	3	5.53 (0.71)	0.77 < 0.84	0.63	0.71	0.84
Affective Commitment	3	5.51 (0.77)	0.80 < 0.84	0.69	0.77	0.87
Work Engagement	3	5.34 (0.84)	0.81 < 0.85	0.69	0.78	0.87

n=156, AVE=average variance extracted, CR=composite reliability, SD=standard deviation.

Table 2. Discriminant validity

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Knowledge-Oriented Leadership	0.79							
2. Managerial Coaching	0.55[**]	0.86						
3. Psychological Meaningfulness	0.57[**]	0.596[**]	0.74					
4. Psychological Safety	0.53[**]	0.47[**]	0.83[**]	0.81				
5. Psychological Availability	0.49[**]	0.47[**]	0.72[**]	0.73[**]	0.73			

6.	Creative Self-Efficacy	0.55^{**}	0.51^{**}	0.78^{**}	0.76^{**}	0.75^{**}	0.79		
7.	Affective Commitment	0.55^{**}	0.44^{**}	0.79^{**}	0.81^{**}	0.72^{**}	0.81^{**}	0.83	
8.	Work Engagement	0.47^{**}	0.37^{**}	0.66^{**}	0.64^{**}	0.61^{**}	0.69^{**}	0.72^{**}	0.83

Note: The bold-faced values in diagonal are √AVE and the other values represent inter-construct correlations.

4.2.   Conditional process analysis

The conditional process analysis was performed by using process model 7 (Hayes, 2017), separately for each positive work attitude as a dependent variable: creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement. Knowledge-oriented leadership was included as an independent variable. Managerial coaching was the moderating variable, and three critical psychological states were included as parallel mediators (meaningfulness, safety, and availability). Table 3 shows the results of moderated-multiple mediation.

Knowledge-oriented leadership, managerial coaching, and their interaction term (KOL×MC) exhibited significant positive relationships with each critical psychological state (meaningfulness, safety, and availability), which in turn revealed significant positive associations with positive work attitudes (creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement). Table 4 shows the conditional effects of focal predictor (KOL) on mediators (critical psychological states) and the conditional indirect effects of focal predictor (KOL) on dependent variables (positive work attitudes) at varying (low, medium, and high) values of the moderator (MC) for evaluating the study hypotheses.

Table 3. Path coefficients

Variables	Psychological States (Mediators)			Positive Work Attitudes (DVs)		
	PM	PS	PA	CSE	AC	WE
KOL	0.43^{**}	0.46^{**}	0.43^{**}	0.08^{ns}	0.07^{ns}	0.09^{ns}
MC	0.23^{**}	0.15^{**}	0.16^{**}			-
KOLxMC	0.09^{**}	0.08^{*}	0.13^{**}			
PM				0.28^{**}	0.24^{**}	0.28^{**}
PS				0.16^{*}	0.35^{**}	0.19^{ns}
PA	-	-	-	0.28^{**}	0.18^{**}	0.22^{*}

Note: AC=affective commitment, CSE=creative self-efficacy, IV=independent variable, KOL=knowledge-oriented leadership, MC=managerial coaching, PA=psychological availability, PM=psychological meaningfulness, PS=psychological safety, WE=work engagement.

Table 4. Conditional effects of focal predictor on mediators and dependent variables

KOL (IV) Paths	MC (Moderator)	Critical Psychological States (Mediating variables)			Positive Work Attitudes (Dependent variables)			Status
		PM	PS	PA	CSE	AC	WE	
		H1a	H1b	H1c				H1 Supported
KOL →	-1.49	0.30** [0.17, 0.44]	0.34** [0.19, 0.49]	0.23** [0.10, 0.36]				
	0.00	0.43** [0.28, 0.58]	0.46** [0.30, 0.63]	0.43** [0.29, 0.58]				
	1.49	0.56** [0.35, 0.76]	0.58** [0.35, 0.81]	0.63** [0.43, 0.83]				
					H2a	H2b	H2c	H2 Supported
KOL → PM →	-1.49				0.08 [0.03, 0.14]	0.07 [0.02, 0.14]	0.08 [0.02, 0.17]	
	0.00				0.12 [0.06, 0.18]	0.10 [0.04, 0.18]	0.12 [0.03, 0.23]	
	1.49				0.15 [0.08, 0.25]	0.13 [0.06, 0.24]	0.15 [0.04, 0.30]	
					H3a	H3b	H3c	H3 Supported
KOL → PS →	-1.49				0.06 [0.01, 0.10]	0.12 [0.05, 0.19]	0.06 [0.00, 0.14]	
	0.00				0.08 [0.02, 0.13]	0.16 [0.09, 0.24]	0.09 [0.00, 0.18]	
	1.49				0.09 [0.03, 0.18]	0.20 [0.12, 0.31]	0.11 [0.00, 0.23]	
					H4a	H4b	H4c	H4 Supported
KOL → PA →	-1.49				0.07 [0.02, 0.12]	0.04 [0.01, 0.09]	0.05 [0.00, 0.11]	
	0.00				0.12 [0.07, 0.19]	0.08 [0.02, 0.15]	0.10 [0.01, 0.20]	
	1.49				0.18 [0.10, 0.27]	0.11 [0.03, 0.22]	0.14 [0.01, 0.29]	

Note: Values with square bracket are the 95% confidence intervals of path coefficients, AC=affective commitment, CSE=creative self-efficacy, IV=independent variable, KOL=knowledge-oriented leadership, MC=managerial coaching, PA=psychological availability, PM=psychological meaningfulness, PS=psychological safety, WE=work engagement.

4.3.   Hypothesis testing

The direct and indirect effect coefficients provided by the moderated-multiple mediation were examined to evaluate the study hypotheses (Table 3). The results supported the significant effects of knowledge-oriented leadership, managerial coaching, and their interaction term on each critical psychological state and the positive work attitude. The outcomes of the conditional process showed an increasing trend in critical psychological states and positive work attitudes with the increasing levels of managerial coaching (Table 4), supporting the study hypotheses described below.

Hypothesis 1 states that as managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively fosters critical psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Results showed that the conditional interactive effect of KOL and MC on each critical psychological state was significant and increased with the increasing level of MC. Specifically, the effect of KOL on psychological meaningfulness increased from 0.30 (low) to 0.43 (medium) to 0.56 (high) with the increasing levels of MC (Table 4, Figure 1A). The interactive effect of KOL on psychological safety increased from 0.34 (low) to 0.46 (medium) to 0.58 (high) with the increasing levels of MC (Table 4, Figure 1B). The interactive effect of KOL on psychological availability increased from 0.23 (low) to 0.43 (medium) to 0.63 (high) with the increasing levels of MC (Table 4, Figure 1C). Hence, H1, H1a, H1b, and H1c were supported.

Hypothesis 2 states that as managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively cultivates creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement by fostering psychological meaningfulness at work. Results showed that the conditional indirect interactive effect of KOL on each positive work attitude via psychological meaningfulness was significant, increasing with the increasing level of MC. Specifically, the effect of KOL on creative self-efficacy via psychological meaningfulness increased from 0.08 (low) to 0.12 (medium) to 0.15 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2A). The effect of KOL on affective commitment via psychological meaningfulness increased from 0.07 (low) to 0.10 (medium) to 0.13 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2B). The effect of KOL on work engagement via psychological meaningfulness increased from 0.08 (low) to 0.12 (medium) to 0.15 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2C). Hence, H2, H2a, H2b, and H2c were supported.

Hypothesis 3 states that as managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively cultivates creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement by fostering psychological safety at work.

Results showed that the conditional indirect interactive effect of KOL on each positive work attitude via psychological safety was significant, increasing with the increasing level of MC. Specifically, the effect of KOL on creative self-efficacy via psychological safety increased from 0.06 (low) to 0.08 (medium) to 0.09 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2A). The effect of KOL on affective commitment via psychological safety increased from 0.12 (low) to 0.16 (medium) to 0.20 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2B). The effect of KOL on work engagement via psychological safety increased from 0.06 (low) to 0.09 (medium) to 0.11 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2C). Hence, H3, H3a, H3b, and H3c were supported.

Hypothesis 4 states that as managerial coaching increases, knowledge-oriented leadership more effectively cultivates creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement by fostering psychological availability at work. Results showed that the condition indirect interactive effect of KOL on each positive work attitude. via psychological availability, was significant, increasing with the increasing level of MC. Specifically, the effect of KOL on creative self-efficacy via psychological availability increased from 0.07 (low) to 0.12 (medium) to 0.18 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2A). The effect of KOL on affective commitment via psychological availability increased from 0.04 (low) to 0.08 (medium) to 0.11 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2B). The effect of KOL on work engagement via psychological availability increased from 0.05 (low) to 0.10 (medium) to 0.14 (high) with the increasing level of MC (Table 4, Figure 2C). Hence, H4, H4a, H4b, and H4c were supported.

Based on the abovementioned findings, the interaction plots to pictorially represent the study hypotheses were created using the data shown in Table 5. Figures 1A, 1B, and 1C illustrated the interaction plots showing conditional effects of knowledge-oriented leadership on critical psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety, and availability, respectively. Figures 2A, 2B and 2C represent the conditional indirect effects of KOL on positive work attitudes: creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement, respectively, via the critical psychological states.

Table 5. Data for visualizing the conditional effects of focal predictor

KOL	MC	PM	PS	PA	CSE	AC	WE
-0.94	-1.49	4.98	4.91	5.10	3.53	3.77	3.36
0.00	-1.49	5.26	5.23	5.32	3.80	4.05	3.64
0.94	-1.49	5.55	5.55	5.54	4.07	4.34	3.91
-0.94	0.00	5.21	5.02	5.16	3.63	3.87	3.46
0.00	0.00	5.61	5.46	5.56	4.00	4.26	3.83
0.94	0.00	6.01	5.89	5.97	4.37	4.64	4.20
-0.94	1.49	5.44	5.14	5.21	3.73	3.98	3.56
0.00	1.49	5.96	5.68	5.80	4.20	4.46	4.02
0.94	1.49	6.48	6.23	6.39	4.68	4.95	4.49

Note: AC=affective commitment, CSE=creative self-efficacy, KOL=knowledge-oriented leadership, PA=psychological availability, PM=psychological meaningfulness, PS=psychological safety, WE=work engagement.
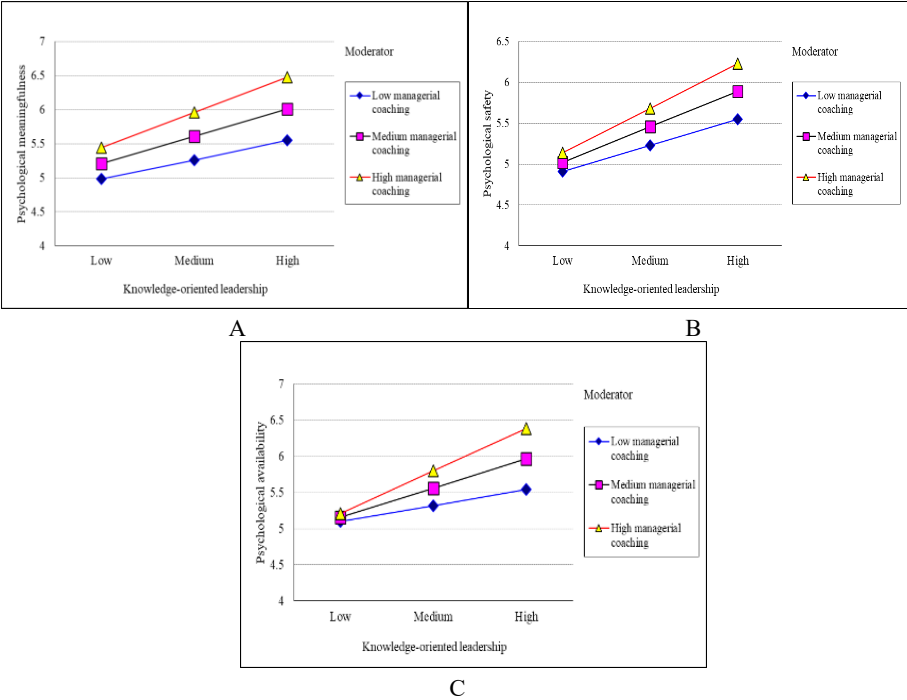
Figure 2. Interaction plots of the conditional effect of KOL on critical psychological states

A

B

C
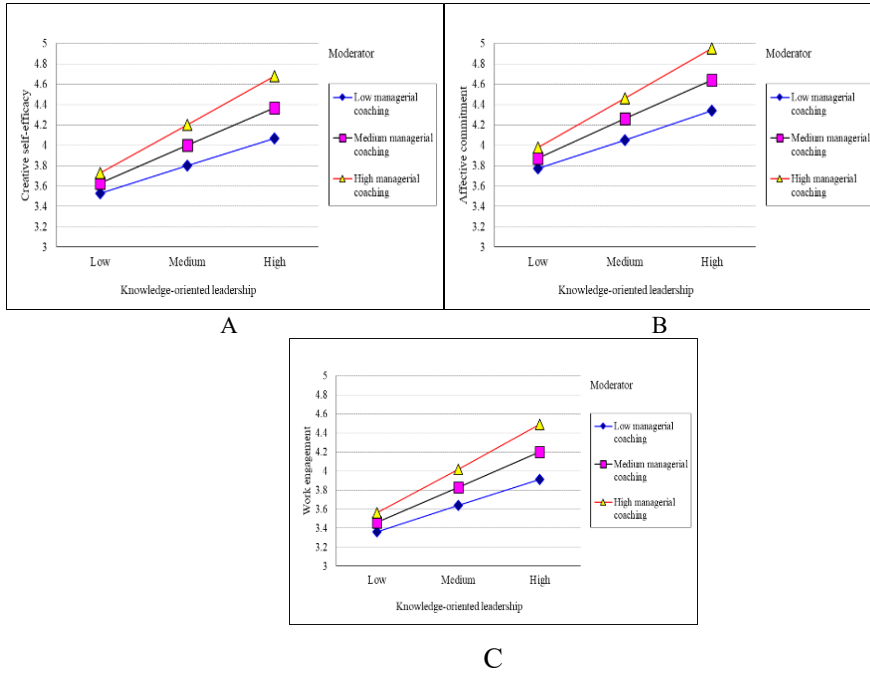
Figure 3. Interaction plots of conditional indirect effects of KOL on positive work attitudes

5. DISCUSSION

In contemporary organizational contexts characterized by accelerated change and intensifying competition, there is a growing expectation for employees to demonstrate positive and innovative work attitudes that align with and support the achievement of strategic business objectives (Javed et al., 2019). This shift reflects the increasing recognition of employee attitudes as a critical driver of organizational adaptability, resilience, and sustainable performance. However, many organizations, including those in the education sector, find their employees lacking innovation and engagement, putting desired success at risk (Serdyukov, 2017). Tertiary colleges and polytechnic institutes, in particular, struggle with inadequate skills and innovation, hindering growth (Rahman et al., 2019). To remain competitive in the international markets, there is a pressing need to transform academic libraries. Yet approximately 85% of universities in Pakistan have not adopted the necessary innovations in their library services (Awais & Ameen, 2019), with college libraries facing even greater challenges. The absence of positive psychological states and work attitudes can be seen as a contributing factor to employee disengagement. Therefore, leadership with a long-term vision and knowledge orientation is essential to foster positivity and

engagement in the workplace.

We proposed and tested how knowledge-oriented leadership and managerial coaching encourage desired positive work attitudes, such as creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement. We examined critical psychological conditions of employees, including psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability, as mechanisms to explain this relationship. Additionally, we investigated the interactive effect of knowledge-oriented leadership and managerial coaching on employees' psychological states and work attitudes. The findings supported our hypotheses that knowledge-oriented leadership predicts positive work attitudes and that psychological conditions mediate this relationship. Furthermore, higher managerial coaching strengthened the ties between knowledge-oriented leadership and positive work attitudes. This highlights the importance of leaders' knowledge orientation and managerial coaching in enhancing employee outcomes. These aspects should be integrated as a regular feature to benefit from the innovative engagement of employees in achieving institutional objectives.

Academic leaders and library managers are tasked with fostering positive relationships with their subordinates and motivating them to achieve their mission and goals (Aslam, 2019). However, the coaching skills and practices that can facilitate this process are understudied, particularly in developing leadership and positive work attitudes in academic settings, including college libraries. While knowledge orientation of leaders, critical psychological states, coaching, and positive work attitudes have been studied independently with various outcome variables, there is a need for further research to explore the interrelationships between these variables in a single study, especially in academic libraries and college education in Pakistan. This ongoing academic discourse is crucial for advancing our understanding of how leadership effectively achieves its goals and what factors mediate or moderate the impact of leadership on desired outcomes, including positive work attitudes.

If not fully utilized, knowledge remains ineffective in achieving organizational outcomes. Leaders play a crucial role in helping individuals develop self-awareness by objectively examining their actions and reactions and facilitating personal growth (Gasperini, 2013). Research highlights the significance of psychological safety in influencing team learning behaviour at work (Edmondson, 2004). Moreover, studies have shown that knowledge management enhances rational decision-making when combined with transformational and transactional leadership (Riaz & Khalili, 2014). Knowledge-oriented management also positively correlates with human resource performance (Torabi et al., 2016). Effective leadership inspires employees to

work diligently towards achieving essential tasks, clarifies the management approach, and encourages employees to follow the leader in attaining organizational goals. Leadership encompasses various aspects, including leadership styles, motivation, and communication (Ribière & Sitar, 2003). Knowledge-oriented leaders adopt a relational approach, collaborating with other knowledge workers, utilizing emotional skills, and creating a conducive psychological environment that fosters meaningfulness, safety, and availability, ensuring employees' physical and psychological well-being to perform tasks effectively (Hansen et al., 2014). Based on this discussion, the following proposition is made:

Knowledge management goals are accomplished by employees' effective encouragement and guidance to leverage them. Implementing a managerial coaching culture can be pivotal in motivating individuals to learn and apply acquired knowledge to their job roles continuously. As drivers of organizational success, leaders must ensure alignment between organizational culture and knowledge management practices through coaching methods and incentives. Integrating knowledge-oriented leadership and a supportive work environment is vital for inspiring employees to exhibit positive work behaviours, such as dedication and commitment, ultimately enhancing overall job performance. By cultivating a culture of coaching and knowledge sharing, organizations can tap into the full potential of their workforce, driving sustainable success.

5.1.   Theoretical and managerial implications

Positive work attitudes result from knowledge-oriented leadership and managerial coaching working together to create an environment where proactive motivation is encouraged (Castiello D'Antonio, 2018; Shamim et al., 2019). By combining these two components, businesses can lay the groundwork for proactive motivation, enabling staff members to take responsibility for their work and pursue greatness. The findings of this study underscore the value of managerial coaching in improving employee outcomes and stress the function that it plays as a catalyst to realize full potential of knowledge-oriented leadership (Ahmed et al., 2024; Jia et al., 2024; Mariam et al., 2019, 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2021; Than et al., 2024).

Knowledge leadership is one of the well-researched leadership abilities when it comes to organizational innovation and performance (U. U. Rehman & Iqbal, 2020; Taylor et al., 2019; Than et al., 2024). The main objectives of traditional leadership programs are the development of transformational leaders, teamwork, motivation, and collaboration. However, they frequently ignore the particular opportunities and difficulties facing libraries and library management,

where fostering diversity in leadership development and protecting professional principles is essential (Hines, 2019).

Fostering a learning culture that promotes teamwork, innovation and competitive advantage requires efficient and effective knowledge management competencies and practices (Hart & Rodgers, 2023; Hussain et al., 2019; Shah et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). Whether used as a formal procedure or a management approach, coaching fosters learning and transformation, which in turn encourages innovation (Caine, 2019). Specifically, strengths-based micro-coaching improves employee engagement and productivity (Peláez et al., 2020). Moreover, studies have demonstrated the connections between leisure time and optimistic psychological states and a range of favourable results (Stebbins, 2018). On the other hand, the motivating effects of ethical leadership on employee success at work might be counteracted by crucial psychological states, including emotional tiredness (Dust et al., 2018).

The tertiary college libraries in Pakistan face several challenges and issues. A few of these include the lack of automation systems, staff training programs, budgetary allocations, and information communication infrastructure and tools. Almost all of these issues can be attributed to the lack of positive psychological states and work attitudes of those involved in policy implementation and practice of the library profession and those in control of libraries being in leadership and management positions. Unfortunately, little importance or priority is accorded to the library profession in the knowledge-seeking process. For this reason, college libraries are thought to be not learning to survive in a competing world.

The role of libraries and library managers must not be ignored when counting upon the performance of educational institutions (Cota, 2024; Hines, 2019; Machara & Jain, 2016; Rabasa & Abrizah, 2024). The main goals of libraries are to encourage reading among the masses, offer resources and research opportunities to support the literacy movement, improve the quality and quantity of education through improved access to the most recent information, and foster national integration through knowledge-based activities. In this context, adopting new technologies and effective management practices in academic libraries are inevitable to introduce innovative and unique library services (Luo & McKinney, 2015).

This study explains that positive work attitudes vary with the change in the psychological states of library employees, which can be improved through knowledge-oriented leadership and regular coaching to employees in work-related matters. These two approaches can help employees derive the meaning of their work, feel safe, and ensure their availability to carry out work tasks

effectively and innovatively. In conjunction with knowledge management practices, managerial coaching fosters information sharing and application, enhancing competencies that support the efficacy of teams and organizations (Jackson et al., 2006). The study results suggest that managers should value critical psychological states and take necessary measures to improve them.

5.2. Limitations and directions for future research

The present investigation is a noteworthy addition to the existing body of research. However, it is imperative to recognize several limitations that could potentially affect the broad application of study findings. Although Harman's single-factor test indicated that common method bias is unlikely to be a significant issue, the cross-sectional survey design may be susceptible to it. Future research could use data triangulation, objective metrics, or longitudinal or experimental approaches to address limitations such as sample size, demographic features, and social desirability bias. Future research can also expand based on this study by identifying and correcting these shortcomings, offering a more thorough understanding of the intricate linkages of knowledge-oriented leadership and managerial coaching with the employee and organizational outcomes.

Nevertheless, future studies should consider employing longitudinal or experimental designs to validate the findings further and mitigate potential methodological limitations. Additionally, using self-reported measures may introduce some subjectivity, highlighting the need for multi-source data collection in future research endeavours. We also recommend replicating this study as a baseline model in the context of university libraries, considering the transformative impact of educational technologies on modern libraries as virtual knowledge hubs for future education. Future research should explore the effects of technological advancements on library employees' psychological conditions and work attitudes, incorporating information technology-related variables as moderators and mediators in this framework.

The small sample size in this study was considered adequate based on the rule of thumb. However, this limitation prevented the participation of diverse institutions from different sub-geographical areas, i.e., districts of Punjab. This aspect restricts the generalizability of findings. Future studies need to consider more extensive probability-based sampling techniques, such as stratified random sampling, to address sampling-related concerns. Moreover, we suggest examining the role of library employees' personal information management motivation and capabilities, knowledge management culture, risk-taking willingness, and sustainable, innovative work behaviour concerning this study.

Addressing these limitations and avenues for future research will provide a more thoughtful understanding of the complex relationships between knowledge-oriented leadership, managerial coaching, and library employees' work attitudes and psychological states.

6. CONCLUSION

Knowledge-oriented leadership positively cultivates positive work attitudes among employees, such as creative self-efficacy, affective commitment, and work engagement, by fostering their psychological states of meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Moreover, managerial coaching augments the beneficial effects of knowledge-oriented leadership, further enhancing critical psychological states and positive work attitudes. These results have significant implications for tertiary colleges, highlighting the importance of adopting a knowledge-oriented leadership approach and fostering a culture of managerial coaching. By doing so, colleges can reap the benefits of employees' psychological well-being and positive work attitudes. Ultimately, this approach can improve employee-organization performance and success, underscoring the significance of prioritizing employee-cantered leadership and development strategies, especially in academic library settings.

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