RESEARCH ARTICLE

Success of the 'first-time first-line manager': model development and validation [version 1; peer review: 2 approved]

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V1 First published: 03 Sep 2021, 3:20
<https://doi.org/10.35241/emeraldopenres.14212.1>
 Latest published: 03 Sep 2021, 3:20
<https://doi.org/10.35241/emeraldopenres.14212.1>

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to identify the factors involved in the success of a 'first-time first-line Manager' (FTFLM), and establish a model for the success of a FTFLM using these identified factors.

Methods: Empirical factors influencing the success of a first-line manager were gathered through the literature review and an experience survey of managers. Based on these factors, a questionnaire for primary research was developed and used for the survey. An exploratory factor analysis of the collected data yielded a nine-factor model which was validated using confirmatory factor analysis.

Findings: A major portion (74%) of the FTFLM's success factors are under the direct control of the FTFLM. The remaining portion (26%) are influenced by the organization's procedures and policies for grooming the FTFLM and the attitude and behaviour of management towards the FTFLM.

Keywords

First Line Manager, Team Management, Managerial Success Factors, First Time Manager, In-Boarding, On-Boarding,

This article is included in the [Responsible Management](#) gateway.

Open Peer Review

Approval Status

	1	2
version 1		
03 Sep 2021	view	view

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Author roles: Raulgaonkar H: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Funding Acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project Administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing

Competing interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Grant information: The author(s) declared that no grants were involved in supporting this work.

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How to cite this article: Raulgaonkar H. **Success of the ‘first-time first-line manager’: model development and validation [version 1; peer review: 2 approved]** Emerald Open Research 2021, 3:20 <https://doi.org/10.35241/emeraldopenres.14212.1>

First published: 03 Sep 2021, 3:20 <https://doi.org/10.35241/emeraldopenres.14212.1>

Introduction

Importance of the 'first line manager' (FLM)

In the game of chess, every pawn is a potential queen.

"Pawns: they are the soul of the game, they alone form the attack and defence" Francois-Andre Danican Philidor, French music composer and chess player. (Jelic, 2013)

The fate of the game is often decided by how the player builds advantageous positions with their pawns, and then uses the higher-order pieces to take advantage of those positions and win the game. The FLM from any function of an organization is also like the pawn, with the potential to become future CEO, leading the organization to success.

The challenge for a 'first-time first-line manager' (FTFLM)

When the management gives complete charge of any functional vertically structured team to a professional who has no prior experience of leading a team, a FTFLM is created. The FTFLM is usually chosen based on their education coupled with the perceived suitability based on prior performance on their assigned jobs which involved individual contributions. The FTFLM does not get any breathing time as the pressure of achieving the team targets is there from the word go. Also, in this period the FTFLM is still in the learning phase and has to give due attention to all of the important aspects of business operations, which consumes considerable time and effort. Hence, the initial 6 months are the testing time for FTFLMs. The obvious choice is to set priorities and follow them during this initial phase until the manager gains enough clarity and confidence to manage and lead the operations of the team. This process of setting priorities and following them diligently differs from person to person. Hence, one witnesses both the extremes, on one hand FTFLMs raising to the level of CEO in their career and, on the other hand, FTFLMs quitting the job with the decision to not return to the team management role in their career. The challenge the FTFLM faces is therefore to improve their performance to the level of FLM in a very short span of time, without compromising the performance of the team they are leading.

Literature review

A management professional typically starts their career as a management trainee and aspires to reach the topmost position in the management hierarchy. At different levels of the hierarchy the manager's role differs a great deal, putting different responsibilities and accountabilities on the manager's shoulders. Hence, the factors for improving the manager's performance and ensuring success differ for the different hierarchical positions. Most available literature addresses the success factors for managers in general and is not specific to the different hierarchical positions. This research instead focuses on the essentials of performance improvement for FTFLMs. This literature review was performed in order to explore the connected topics of the roles managers perform, the factors influencing their success, team management, the on-boarding process and the FLM, these are reviewed in chronological order.

Roles of a manager

Although there is initially a learning phase for the FTFLM, they are still expected to perform the role of a full-fledged manager from the day one. The different roles a manager performs, involve one or more of three basic behaviours viz. interpersonal, information processing and transmitting and as the decision-maker (Mintzberg, 1971). In the early seventies, Greek managers aligned with their Latin-European counterparts and possessed very little belief in subordinates' initiative-taking, and thus advocated the necessity of 'internal control', which a line manager must exercise as a primary function (Cummings, 1972). In addition to traditional functions of a manager, namely planning, organizing, co-ordinating, and controlling, managers of high performing units were also actively involved in the budgeting activity which was an important aspect of the management accounting system (Macintosh, 1992).

In the early nineties, as the economic and commercial world started opening up and global markets started becoming accessible, and the organization's focus shifted from local to global operations. In that light even the roles managers are expected to play changed considerably. Hart & Quinn (1993) defined four managerial roles, 'vision setter', 'motivator', 'analyser' and 'task master'. Lamude & Scudder (1995) explored the different influence tactics used by managers such as rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, consultations, ingratiation, exchange, coalition tactics, pressure and upward appeals. They further connected these tactics to the managerial roles given by Hart and Quinn e.g. the 'vision setter' manager must create a collective purpose, for which they often employ 'soft' tactics such as inspirational appeals and consultation tactics. 'Motivator' managers, on the other hand, were found to employ more inspirational and ingratiating tactics, and fewer exchange tactics.

In the late nineties, as organizations embarked on local and global expansion journeys, they started experiencing different kinds of disruptions. Handling these different disruptions posed different challenges for the organizations and their managers. Prahalad (1998) explored the expected eight discontinuities which would drastically change the emerging competitive business landscape. These discontinuities are globalization, deregulation and privatization, volatility, convergence, indeterminate industry boundaries, rapidly changing standards, disintermediation and eco-sensitivity. He pointed out that organizations would face a new economic situation as all the above discontinuities would act simultaneously. He indicated five distinct tasks which managers need to handle in the coming future which were gaining access to and absorbing new knowledge, integrating multiple streams of knowledge, sharing across cultures and distance, learning to forget the old ways of doing business and deploying competence across business unit boundaries. Prahalad advised 'reengineering' of the organizations' operations involving the FLMs for removing the gap between the desired system and system on the ground.

The turn of the century witnessed a rise in job opportunities for dynamic managers, including the FLMs. The higher rate

of turnover of managers forced organizations to look inward into their policies. Japanese organizations were seen to adopt policies to retain dynamic employees and transform them into loyal ones. Japanese organizations attached the highest importance to the building of managerial skill through workplace learning. They also strived to balance the adoption of newer global practices with global link building and culture-led managerial practices. For the Japanese managers, the concept of organization as a family emphasized the unilateral benevolence of managers. This indirectly sustained loyalty towards the organization, obligations to the team members, and trust as the base of every transaction (Pearson *et al.*, 2003).

In recent times the role of manager has truly become multi-dimensional, expecting them to display maturity along all the dimensions. Glinkowska & Kaczmarek (2017) suggested that the manager of the future should be an excellent informant and competent partner, a practitioner who has familiarity with business realities and is a visionary, coupled with excellent motivational skills. Furthermore, the manager should indicate changes in the rules and react to the changes positively, maintain a balance between result-orientation and respect for subordinates and possess patience, good communication skills, good listening skills and should always be ready to assist their team-mates. They should have an open mind for suggestions and ideas given by others, should practice a 'forgive and let go' attitude and have the required skills to represent the company to employees as well as outsiders. Managers should be 'eco-leaders' who employ a strict approach and believe in distributing responsibilities, establishing management information systems, and working towards connecting people to the available technology. Sandhu & Kulik (2019) claimed that championing the configuration of formalization at the organizational level, coupled with flexibility at a managerial level, is the most effective combination. This semi-structured configuration can provide the elusive balance required to initiate and adopt innovations.

Today's buzzword is artificial intelligence (AI). It is primarily going to replace humans in performing various tasks and will find applications in different fields such as finance, healthcare, transport, the arts, and many others. Chernov & Chernova (2019) studied the impact of AI in the management domain in order to determine its opportunities and challenges. They identified a readiness among managers to transfer the performance of various aspects of their jobs to AI, including resource allocation (67%), strategy development (24%), data analysis (84%), problem-solving (26%), planning and scheduling (82%), reporting (73%), decision making (32%) and coordination and control (56%). With respect to the top three skills required for the future, digital technology usage appeared in the top three of 52% of surveyed managers, whereas creative thinking appeared in the top three of 48 % of surveyed managers, and strategy development appeared in the top three of 43% of surveyed managers. Furthermore, 52% of managers mentioned that they use their own previous experience in making their managerial decisions, while 26% said they rely on their intuition, and 22% use decision-making techniques. Thus, future managers would definitely lose their routine job functions to AI, but the jobs which

involve elements like collaboration with other people, creating professional or social networks for collective engagement and utilizing innovative out of box thinking have to be still performed by human managers.

One more important role the team manager plays is improving the resilience of the project team under them. The team manager's signature strengths such as Leadership style, open-mindedness, persistence, hope, and others, which are witnessed by the team members through routine interactions with the team manager, influence them and help in making the team strong and resilient to adverse events in the future (Karlsen, 2020).

As the roles the managers perform exist in many dimensions, so are the factors influencing the success of managers. The literature is reviewed along this dimension in chronological order below.

Factors for effective performance for managers

By the late nineties, the television became part of most households as a major source of entertainment. Television provided millions of sports lovers and followers access to their favourite sport competitions, live right in their homes. Some of the sports like football, basketball, cricket and others earned millions and billions in different currencies. The increased stakes in such games brought with it a more scientific and professional approach in training the players individually and as teams. John Wooden, a renowned basketball coach, gave the sports world a unique 360-degree approach to developing teams by developing the well-known "pyramid of success". Kaye & Kleiner (1996) utilised John Wooden's style of coaching along with the 'the pyramid of success' within a management setting. They advocated that the manager should establish "the pyramid of success," having a strong base of a strong, supporting, trustworthy, dependable team. The team should have friendship, loyalty, enthusiasm, diligence and ample cooperation among the team members. The second tier should consist of the self-control, intensity, alertness and initiative of the teammates. The third tier covers conditioning, skill and team spirit, which ensures continuous team development. Every member must seek the growth of individual skills, but flexibility for the good of the team is essential. The last two tiers should include the poise, confidence, and competitive greatness of the team members with the ultimate focus on the team's good. Properly focused ambition, adaptability to challenges, resourcefulness, faith in oneself and in the team, the ability to fight back after failure, patience, reliability, integrity, honesty, and sincerity should be the strings to hold this pyramid structure together.

Around the turn of the century China's growth attracted many management thinkers to the study of the Chinese way of running businesses and achieving success. Tabak, Solomon and Nielsen (1998) explored the field of managerial success in companies operating in the People's Republic of China. They noticed that supervisory ability was the most significant factor in improving managerial effectiveness. This was followed by achievement motivation, intelligence, self-actualization, self-assurance, decisiveness and personal values. Stivers, Adams and Liu (2008) identified

managerial success factors such as work habits, teamwork, creativity, ethics, communication, leadership and relevant business area knowledge from their studies of Chinese managers.

In recent times, managers were expected to review the organization's vision and mission statements with the teammates and explain the team's role in it, create a plan for achieving the team's goals and implement it effectively. Rafe (2015) suggested that the manager should earn the respect of the team by following a five-step plan, consisting of helping the team to plan, helping the team members define themselves as a unit, motivating team members for team success, adapting their management style to the team's needs, and effectively communicating with team members. Newton (2016) suggested five important dimensions to improve team performance and achieve success. Along with open and effective communication with the team, the author stressed the importance of developing trust among the team members, constructive management of conflicts, encourage collaborative problem-solving and encourage collaborative decision making.

The performance of a team can be seen as a sum total of the performances of individual members of the team. Also the individual performances strongly depend on the employee engagement which in turn gets mediated by the commitment level of the employee towards the organization and also the organizational citizenship behaviour (Uddin, 2019). In a recently published article, Cook (2019) lists factors influencing a manager's success as, the manager's strategic thinking, networking, adaptability, building successful teams, decision making, building positive relationships, problem-solving, building trust, coaching, maintaining a positive disposition, superior communications and being a forward looking professional in today's global business environment. Moura and others studied the performance improvement factors in information systems project teams. The most significant factors identified were: mutual trust among team members, setting clear goals, effective communication, and the existence of good systems for motivating, recognizing and rewarding team members. These factors improve the morale of team members and lead teams to effective performance (Moura, 2019).

Managers soon realise that the transformation of the team under them must begin with their own transformation into an improved professional and human being. To become a successful manager, one must first develop a strong platform based on trust, transparency, honest communication, self-discipline, impartial behaviour and positive disposition, and all of these must originate with the manager and endlessly flow to the team members.

Improvement of the team's output has always been one of the main objectives to be achieved by a manager. In fact, in the evaluation of manager's performance, the team's target achievements always appear as a major component. Management researchers have focused on this topic since the early sixties. The work done by many renowned management researchers is captured below chronologically.

Team development and team performance improvement

In 1965, Tuckman gave his four-stage model, which involved forming, storming, norming and performing in that order, with respect to the development of the team under managers (Tuckman, 1965). Later in 1977 he added 'adjourning' to it to make it a five-stage model (Tuckman, 1977). The manager needs to be a good and active listener, a quick decision maker and should possess the ability to guide team members to remain focused on team goals. He believed that the manager must work to bring cohesion, trust, mutual respect, and harmony to the team. Also, the manager must be a good observer, facilitator, and work as a mentor, offering the team members greater opportunities to raise the level of their expertise. As per the legendary basketball coach John Wooden, the main role of the team leader is to convey team spirit in all situations and inculcate the feeling that the team is supreme. In his words, 'The main ingredient of stardom is the rest of the team', 'It is amazing how much can be accomplished if no one cares who gets the credit'. His lessons on team building are also applicable for managers at work and leading a team (Wooden, 1972).

Long (1997) elaborated on his list of ingredients for a high-performance team. He advised that the team manager should induce the required level of 'sense of urgency' in team members by setting the expected level of performance standard to be accomplished and also ensuring adequate attention, involvement, and support of the senior management. The manager must develop a habit of giving positive feedback, recognition, or words of praise, which increases the commitment levels of the team members. The manager must also develop patience as building a performing team does not happen overnight.

By the turn of the century, most employees of mid and large size organizations had adequate education, knowledge and skills in the relevant verticals. This was a result of a focus on basic and specialized education in most countries. Now, managers started handling teams where sometimes the team members had attained higher levels of education than the manager. This posed a unique challenge to the managers. Mintzberg (1998) draws parallels from his study of the famous Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra artistic director, Bramwell Tovey. He advocates for managers to adopt covert leadership rather than overt leadership if the team members are highly competent and dedicated. The author further observes that leadership is exercised at three different levels. At an individual level, the leader mentors and motivates team members individually. At the group level, the leader builds teams and resolves conflicts, if any. At an organizational level, leaders build culture.

Ketelhut (1999) says that the manager should focus on the purpose of the team, the structure of the team with well-defined rules and responsibilities, the building of team skills and competencies, the team's internal relationships and finally the recognition and rewards in line with the achievements of the team members. Hackman (2005) a researcher from

Harvard, identified the factors that lead to the formation of a successful Team. He pointed out that the manager has to make the team a “real team” by making it the most desirable place to work so that there is hardly any turnover in the team. The manager of the team must make SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) goals for the team and clearly communicate these so that they are well understood by all the team members. In addition, the manager should connect these goals to the organization’s mission and communicate it as well. This gives each team member a sense of pride and unity with the entire organization. To ensure that conflicts do not form the basis of decision making within the team, and that instead persuasion and well-presented arguments guide it, the manager should ensure that some of the key players within the team’s structure possess good social skills. Such key players also ensure that the behaviour of the team members is guided by strong norms, and there exists certain discipline within the team. For the development of individual team members, a system like periodic appraisal should be adopted, and the manager must work on organizing the required training, resources, etc. to ensure improvement.

In the decade gone by, organizations started experiencing rapidly changing business environment. Its managers’ had to adopt their team management techniques accordingly to ensure survival or steady growth of the organization. Core (2014) suggests the team manager give some ‘MEAT’ (motivation, energy, ability and triggers) to the team to influence its behaviour in order to achieve improved team performance. In this, the team manager’s role is of utmost importance as these four factors must originate from them and trickle down to the team members. The team manager must install daily triggers to ensure proactive behaviour, which in turn fuels consistent motivation and focus, rules such as ‘the first sales call of the day must be made at 9am’ can work as a universal trigger. David (2014) offers practical suggestions to team managers for improving the team’s performance, which includes building trust and positive team culture, clarifying everyone’s role, setting the terms of reference and agenda, holding regular meetings, managing the team’s size, celebrating success as a team and offering rewards for contributions.

Thus, the manager must understand that their success or failure is no different than the team’s success or failure. Hence team management and team development are the way forward for achieving success as a manager. Close communication with each and every team member makes the manager aware of the gaps which are needed to be bridged by effort and resources. The manager must have their team improvement plan in place and must work on it silently but steadily and witness the team performance gradually reaching its peak as the time progresses. When a manager works for the betterment of the team members, the team members individually and together start working for the manager, the department, and hence the organization with increased zeal and commitment.

The discussion so far is with reference to the managers in general, but some management researchers took efforts to

look into the pawns of the businesses, namely the FLMs. Let us now look at some of such researchers’ contributions in chronological order.

The FLM

Traditionally an FLM is the lowermost cadre of management. The FLM ensures that things are done as per the plan at the ground level by the employees. Most of the FLM’s time is consumed in the process of supervising team members in action and solving their problems as and when they surface. Although the FLM is expected to take care of many functions on daily basis, the prime focus/accountability/responsibility lies in the performance of the team that reports to them. Usually, no one else interferes with their team management and hence no one also shares the responsibility of the success or failure of the team.

Sasser & Leonard (1980) list the challenges faced by this first level of managers. The foremost challenge is human relations with team members, followed by the technical competence required to keep pace with technological advancements. The authors describe first level managers as being ‘caught in the crossfire’ between the mid-level managers who demand reduced costs, increased efficiencies, and performance, and on the other hand, the workmen who push for more wage rates, increased security, and comfort.

In the nineties, many organizations across the world started investing in the training of their workforce, including first line managers. Some organizations hired professional organizations who designed and executed detailed training programs for the organizations. Pearce highlights the key points and learnings from Britain’s Imperial Chemical Industry’s (ICI) FLM program. The individuals selected for the role of FLM need to be proactive, competent, and confident so that they can create a vision in the team to manage the business’ requirements. Furthermore, FLMs must be able to translate business goals into understandable and achievable objectives for the team, and also to gather the required level of technical and professional knowledge, skills, and management practices (Pearce, 1992).

Hales (2005) argues that, due to radical organizational changes, even though the core role is still the supervision of the team below, a number of other responsibilities are regularly coming the FLM’s way. This includes stewardship, implementing strategies into operations, unit management involving short term planning, resource optimization & risk management. Also, depending on their business management educational exposure, they are also sometimes drawn into the business decision-making process and successfully contribute to it. Pollitt (2007) established Pfizer Global Manufacturing’s initiative to develop their line supervisors into better team leaders/managers. With the help of a company named ‘Clear-worth’, Pfizer designed a yearlong program named ‘Explorer’ focused on developing 12 desired behaviours, classified in four sections, in the participants. These were: a) team purpose and output: turning strategies into actions, measuring performance,

delivering on the promise; b) team leadership and motivation: dealing with self-awareness, impact on others, motivation, and challenge; c) team dynamics and meetings: concentrating on playing to strengths, working for each other, making meetings matter; and d) team context and environment: managing the outside, connecting with the future, making learning the norm. The participants showed clear signs of transformation and started their journey to become effective team leaders and managers, contributing to performance improvements in their respective departments.

De Smet, McGurk and Vinson (2009) divide the jobs done by FLMs into three categories for analysis. The three categories are administration/meetings, onsite with the frontline workforce, and others. The report indicated that across the industries, frontline managers generally spend 10 to 40% of their time supervising their employees, including on the job coaching. In some cases, first-level managers in manufacturing were found to be occupied in other activities up to 50% of their time. Robertson (2014) mentions that, although the FLMs are the largest and arguably the most important group of leaders in any organization, it is the most neglected group when it comes to training and development. The usual attitude of the senior management towards this group is that of "sink or swim," which negatively affects their levels of engagement, and in turn, they also fail to engage the workmen down the line, and the organization suffers badly. The article further mentions the five core "engagement needs" which are enjoyment, belonging, advancement, recognition, and accomplishment.

Bradford (2017) explored the need for effective training for FLMs. The author highlighted that the training can be on-the-job training, more formal in-house programs or selected external training delivered by professionals who have expertise in this area. More care is to be taken to ensure that the FLM training programs focus properly and give priority to interpersonal skills, communication, and teamwork. Ellström & Ellström (2018) suggest a shift away from the FLM's role as a subject-matter expert and controller to a more supportive and educating role involved in facilitating employee learning and development, i.e. learning-oriented leadership.

On-boarding of FTFLMs

On-boarding is the initial process of assimilating new hires into the organization. In professionally managed organizations, on-boarding is primarily a function of the human resource department. In most on-boarding programs, socializing among the colleagues is suggested to ease the acceptance of the new hire in the organization and the working teams.

In-boarding

The author takes freedom to coin a new word, 'in-boarding', and defines it as:

"The process of self-transformation of the first-time first-line manager, in order to get established as an effective first-line manager, irrespective of the external dynamics of the team, the department and the organization."

This transformation of the FTFLM usually begins from the very first day of their interaction with the boss/mentor, colleagues and the team members. The FTFLM realizes the need for self-improvement in many areas connected to the job entrusted upon them. These areas include but are not restricted to relevant technical knowledge, practical understanding of the process, the dos and don'ts of the operations with the required level of clarity, mastering the tools or technology involved, understanding the machines and technology used in the operations, and the list goes on. In addition to these, the FTFLM's human handling capability also requires improvement, which includes enhancement of soft skills, handling of interpersonal relations, presentation skills, discipline, accuracy, negotiation, and learning to compromise their ego when needed for survival and growth.

Stemming from the realization of existing gaps in these various areas between their current level and the minimum required level, the FTFLM's self-transformation begins. To successfully fill in these gaps and build their acceptance as an effective FLM amongst the reporting team members as well as with senior management may take some months depending on the individual's capability to transform. For some, this self-realization never happens, and the FTFLM ends up remaining just an FLM by name, and is not an effective action-oriented FLM. Thus in-boarding happens for the FTFLM, which depends on the characteristics of the individual and determines the success of the candidate in the current role of FLM, as well as the FLM's future growth in the management hierarchy. The organization and senior managers can also effectively contribute to the in-boarding process. They should indirectly help the FTFLM's in-boarding process, by creating the right atmosphere and offering proper guidance to the FLM through mentoring and/or highly effective training/transformational programs conducted by professionals.

Methods

Successful transformation of the FTFLMs into motivated, successful FLMs is one of the most important objectives of any organization. Currently, even well-established organizations find it challenging to achieve this objective and find it difficult to get ideal FLMs. There is dire need to explore all the elements which contribute to the transformation of the FTFLMs into successful FLMs who would take up the reins of the departments with full involvement and confidence.

Research problem

The lack of comprehensive understanding of the factors involved in the transformation of a first-time first-line manager into a successful first-line manager, on the part of organization as well as the FTFLM.'

Research objectives

- To develop a comprehensive list of all the observed parameters which influence the performance of FTFLMs.
- To understand the underlying factors of these observed parameters.

- Develop and validate a structural model to establish relationships among these factors.

Experience survey

Prior to the design of the questionnaire for the primary survey, an experience survey was conducted via individual interviews with 16 conveniently chosen managers with varied backgrounds but who all had experience of the FTFLM phase. This experience survey was an exploratory stage, with the purpose of ensuring that the list of variables going into the making of the questionnaire for the upcoming survey did not miss out on any crucial variable influencing the success of FTFLM.

All of the interviews were free flowing discussions conducted by the author either by telephone or by meeting the manager in person. Before starting each of the interviews, the manager being interviewed was briefed on the purpose of interview. The assurance of anonymity throughout the research and publication process was given to every manager being interviewed. The permission for recording the interview in audio form on a mobile phone for converting it into a transcript later on was also obtained from each interviewed manager orally during the recording process.

In these interviews author requested the managers to share their FTFLM phase experiences and also asked their thoughts on how the FTFLM can successfully transform into an effective FLM. These 16 interview voice recordings were converted into transcripts. (Raulgaonkar, 2021b)

The list of parameters influencing FTFLM's success, obtained from the literature review and the experience survey, was the basis for developing the questionnaire for the primary research. The questionnaire was designed to collect two responses from the manager for each factor, the manager's opinion/desire with respect to the parameters (the ideal scenario) and the manager's actual experience during their FTFLM phase with respect to the parameter. The questionnaire was administered as an online survey form (Raulgaonkar, 2021c). The sampling method employed was non-probability sampling with a mix of 'purposive sampling' combined with 'snowball sampling.' Goodman explained snowball sampling as a method in which the respondents, after giving their response further, suggest and give contact details for other probable respondents for the survey (Goodman, 1961). The respondent managers were invited through emails and telephone calls for participating in the survey. A total of 118 managers participated in the survey during the period 6th August, 2019 to 15th September, 2019. The initial raw data is available in excel format (Raulgaonkar, 2021d). Data was coded (Raulgaonkar, 2021e) and was converted for analysis using IBM SPSS 21 (Raulgaonkar, 2021f)

Ethical information

Since the study was based on a questionnaire and survey, and confidentiality regarding participants in the study was maintained, the University research committee opined that this research work does not require ethical approval. The author

has received a written communication to this effect from the University research committee, which was issued after scrutinizing the research method employed by the author.

Data analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out for the 118 recorded responses with respect to the ideal case scenario, (Raulgaonkar, 2021f) using principal component analysis as the method of factor extraction. In the EFA process, the variables with higher loading on more than one factors and variables with insignificant loading on any factor were dropped. The final 33 variables (Raulgaonkar, 2021h) yielded the nine-factor model solution (Raulgaonkar, 2021i). The 'component correlation matrix' using the oblique rotation 'oblimin', shows that all the values except diagonal values were found to be less than 0.32. This indicates that the factors yielded by the EFA have least correlation amongst themselves and hence orthogonal rotation can be employed. The orthogonal rotation 'varimax' was employed.

In Table 1, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.827 indicates the data adequacy for the factor analysis. The Bartlett's chi square significance value of 0.000 indicates that the component correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and hence the overall suitability of the collected data for the exploratory factor analysis. In Table 2, the nine extracted factors explain 69.54% of the 'total variance.'

Table 3 shows the 'parallel analysis' performed using the 'Parallel Services Engine' on 1st Dec 2019 at 7.50 am. The analysis gave the percentile eigenvalues of randomly generated uncorrelated variables as lesser than the eigenvalues for the extracted nine factors. This supports the decision to retain the nine number of factors from the EFA.

Kline (1993) stresses that the researcher must interpret the factors based on the loadings given by the factor analysis and validate the interpretation with reference to the external logical criteria. The factor loadings are the correlations of the variables with the derived factors. These loadings are usually considered high loadings if they are above 0.6, irrespective of their sign, and are considered moderately high if they are above 0.3. Other loadings can be ignored. In order to provide meaningful interpretations at least two or three variables must load on a factor (Taherdoost *et al.*, 2014). After studying emerged loadings in this factor analysis, 0.59 is considered as the cut off for assigning the variables to the

Table 1. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.827
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1394.410
	Degrees of freedom (df)	378
	Sig.	.000

Table 2. Total variance explained.

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	8.020	28.644	5.833	20.833	20.833	28.644	5.833	20.833	20.833
2	2.413	8.619	2.241	8.005	28.838	37.263	2.241	8.005	28.838
3	1.743	6.224	2.020	7.214	36.052	43.487	2.020	7.214	36.052
4	1.501	5.360	1.846	6.594	42.646	48.847	1.846	6.594	42.646
5	1.336	4.771	1.632	5.827	48.474	53.618	1.632	5.827	48.474
6	1.230	4.392	1.535	5.484	53.957	58.010	1.535	5.484	53.957
7	1.131	4.039	1.534	5.480	59.437	62.048	1.534	5.480	59.437
8	1.075	3.840	1.502	5.363	64.800	65.888	1.502	5.363	64.800
9	1.024	3.656	1.328	4.743	69.544	69.544	1.328	4.743	69.544
10	.921	3.288							
11	.800	2.857							
12	.736	2.628							
13	.655	2.339							
14	.593	2.118							
15	.590	2.106							
16	.531	1.896							
17	.480	1.715							
18	.464	1.657							
19	.398	1.421							
20	.371	1.327							
21	.361	1.288							
22	.331	1.181							
23	.297	1.062							
24	.257	.917							
25	.243	.869							
26	.204	.729							
27	.176	.630							
28	.120	.428							

Extraction method: principal component analysis.

formed factors. The first factor has 10 variables loading it, two factors have three variables loading them each and remaining six factors have two variables loading them each.

The nine-factor rotated component matrix is shown in [Table 4](#) which also indicates the loading of initial components

and the nine factors. The nine factors along with their ‘factor names’, ‘factor codes’ and loaded observed components is shown in [Table 5](#).

[Table 6](#) gives the Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the emerged nine individual factors. Cronbach’s alpha tends to be a bit

Table 3. Parallel analysis.

Component or factor	Mean eigenvalue	Percentile eigenvalue
1	1.474819	1.667575
2	1.262130	1.399163
3	1.111703	1.265740
4	0.984972	1.094030
5	0.867865	0.997943
6	0.769845	0.856312
7	0.687591	0.785610
8	0.601782	0.686870
9	0.527986	0.607472

biased, as observed by few researchers, and has even been abandoned for use as a quality measure of a developed construct (Peters, 2014). Hence, even though some of the above nine factors had lesser Cronbach's alpha values, they were retained for further reliability analysis employing other modern measures, as the nine factors together explain 69.54% of total variance and also logically and theoretically play very important roles in influencing the FTFLM's success.

The factors are divided into two categories based on the ownership of actions to be taken. The first category of factors is where the onus for action lies with the senior management and the human resource department as they create the required infrastructure, environment, and organize training. The second category of factors, where the onus obviously lies with the FTFLM and only FTFLM. Figure 1 shows the relative importance of the two categories.

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for establishing the reliability and validity of the emerged factor model is done

Table 4. Rotated component matrix^a.

	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Develop ownership feeling towards team-ideal	.838	.142	.027	-.039	.066	.028	-.151	.106	.018
Develop ownership feeling towards work-ideal	.808	.171	.092	-.013	-.037	-.008	-.111	.094	.012
Invest efforts root cause analysis-ideal	.757	.103	.115	.173	.030	-.150	-.086	.104	.141
Take efforts improve listening skills-ideal	.749	.357	.027	.029	.045	.017	.057	.059	.147
Develop ownership feeling towards company-ideal	.731	.313	.109	.045	.016	.101	.130	-.023	-.039
Publicly appreciate achiever team members-ideal	.714	-.106	.288	-.010	.074	.105	-.084	-.019	.104
Ensure material availability team requirements-ideal	.662	-.166	.012	.315	.324	-.027	-.016	.200	.037
Inculcate unity feeling team members-ideal	.641	.351	.066	.209	-.013	.033	.107	.104	-.058
Shoulder responsibility of team failure-ideal	.639	.129	.160	.171	.236	.102	.174	-.059	-.070
Counsel unwilling nonworking subordinates-ideal	.598	.110	.237	.266	-.065	.012	.373	.055	.133
Initial induction training leadership skill-ideal	.256	.761	-.058	.290	.047	-.041	.081	.080	.053
Initial induction training team management-ideal	.272	.714	.177	.279	.046	.044	-.116	.152	.113
Initial induction training communication skills-ideal	.451	.702	.054	-.104	.140	.066	.167	-.093	-.032
Socialize with subordinates-ideal	.163	.030	.764	.199	.176	-.024	.032	.145	-.031
Arrange occasional get-togethers with subordinates-Ideal	.258	-.024	.714	.315	-.099	.161	.022	.087	.001
Indicate things disapprove-of subordinates/team-ideal	.194	.138	.686	-.235	.222	.085	.039	.050	.143
Focus certificate course instead work-ideal	.067	.183	.141	.752	.228	.037	-.035	.108	.020
Innovative approach instead traditional approach-ideal	.251	.180	.070	.745	.013	.128	.099	-.044	.085
Fulfil subordinates shop-floor/field requirements-ideal	.035	.007	.202	.106	.773	-.028	-.040	.145	.026
Push subordinate's training proposals management-Ideal	.192	.157	.012	.106	.667	.207	.143	.014	.152

	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Fault finding mission working subordinates-ideal	-.108	.152	.167	.063	.130	.800	.086	.026	-.013
Take non-achievers to task-Ideal	.185	-.128	-.021	.095	.013	.781	-.027	.207	.174
Transfer new location new team-ideal	-.041	.031	-.028	.082	-.119	-.047	.778	.095	.052
Reduce targets settling new role-Ideal	.009	.052	.091	-.071	.353	.153	.678	-.017	.034
Respond official communication same day-ideal	.204	.050	.155	.144	.100	.002	-.085	.825	.064
Office meetings instead field meetings-ideal	.053	.084	.091	-.077	.080	.285	.252	.719	.019
Dedicated office interacting team members-Ideal	.065	-.017	-.111	.043	-.033	.131	.206	.191	.776
Enrolled in manager welfare schemes-Ideal	.097	.139	.259	.066	.264	.018	-.111	-.131	.732

Extraction method: principal component analysis.

Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalization.^a

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

using the Smart PLS3 software (Raulgaonkar, 2021j). Figure 2 the nine-factor model in Smart PLS 3, shows interactions of the three factors of category 1 with the six factors of category 2.

Campbell & Fiske (1959) proposed two aspects to test construct validity: convergent validity and discriminant validity. CFA is used to assess the construct validity. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the convergent validity of the measurement model can be assessed by the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE). CR is a less biased estimate of reliability than Cronbach's alpha, the acceptable value of CR is 0.7 and above (Alarcon, 2015; Kline, 2011). AVE measures the level of variance captured by a construct versus the level due to measurement error, values above 0.7 are considered very good, whereas the level of 0.5 is acceptable.

In 2017, Cheung and Wang recommended: (a) convergent validity criteria: AVE is not significantly smaller than 0.5 and standardized factor loadings of all items are not significantly less than 0.5; and (b) discriminant validity criteria: correlation between two constructs is not significantly larger than 0.7 (Cheung, 2017). Table 7 shows the CFA's 'quality criteria result' for the CR with all values above 0.7. Table 8 shows the AVE values, with no value less than 0.5. Hence convergent validity is established.

For discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion compares the amount of variance captured by the construct with the amount of variance shared with other constructs. Hence the criterion is that the square root of AVE for each construct should be greater than the correlations involving the constructs. In addition to this, Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt (2015) introduced the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of the correlations

(HTMT) to access discriminant validity. A HTMT ratio lower than the threshold of 0.9 establishes discriminant validity. Table 9 and Table 10 show the discriminant validity criteria are satisfied.

Variance inflation factor (VIF) is a measure of multicollinearity (Mansfield, 1982). VIF measures how many times larger the variance would be for multicollinear data than for the orthogonal data where each VIF is 1. If the VIFs are not unusually larger than 1, then the multicollinearity is not a problem within the constructs. There is no consensus on the cut-off value for VIF but some researchers take it as > 5 and some consider it as > 10 (Neter, 1996). Smart PLS software calculates two sets of VIFs; outer VIFs for individual constructs with respect to their variables and inner VIFs for among the constructs (Vatcheva, 2016). Table 11 shows that the outer VIF values are not exceptionally higher than 1 and none of them is higher than 5. Table 12 shows that the inner VIF values are nicely poised just above 1 with the maximum being 1.053. Thus, the constructs do not suffer from multicollinearity issue.

Thus, the nine factors 'FTFLM performance improvement model' for achieving success during the initial FTFLM phase stands the required reliability and validity criteria.

The proposed final model for FTFLM's success

The final proposed nine-factor model for achieving success for the FTFLM is shown in Table 13.

FTFLM's in-boarding strength score (FISS)

As stated earlier, out of the nine factors, the onus of action with respect to six factors lies with the FTFLM. Hence, the effort taken by the FTFLM in line with these six factors play a major role in the FTFLM's success. Let us denote the level of this effort taken by FTFLM, as the FTFLM's 'in-boarding Strength'.

Table 5. The nine factors, factor codes and components.

Factor	Factor Code	Observed component
Develop emotional-professional connect in team members	DEPCITM	Develop ownership feeling towards team-ideal
		Develop ownership feeling towards work-ideal
		Invest efforts root cause analysis-ideal
		Develop ownership feeling towards company-ideal
		Take efforts improve listening skills-ideal
		Inculcate unity feeling team members-ideal
		Shoulder responsibility of team failure-ideal
		Publicly appreciate achiever team members-ideal
		Ensure material availability team requirements-ideal
		Counsel unwilling nonworking subordinates-ideal
Impart leadership and managerial skills	ILAMS	Initial induction training leadership skill-ideal
		Initial induction training team management-ideal
		Initial induction training communication skills-ideal
Develop emotional-social connect with team members	DESCWTM	Arrange occasional get-togethers with subordinates-ideal
		Socialize with subordinates-ideal
		Indicate things disapprove-off subordinates/team-ideal
Bring new knowledge to team	BNKTT	Focus certificate course instead work-ideal
		Innovative approach instead traditional approach-ideal
Passionately improve subordinate's performance and skills	PISPAS	Fulfil subordinates' shop-floor/field requirements-ideal
		Push subordinate's training proposals management-ideal
Closely supervise and reprimand negligent behaviour	CSARNB	Fault finding mission working subordinates-ideal
		Take non-achievers to task-ideal
Provide transit period breather to team manager	PTPBTTM	Transfer new location new team-ideal
		Reduce target setting new role- Ideal
Develop self-disciplined professional behaviour	DSDPB	Respond to official communication same day-ideal
		Office meetings instead of field Meetings-Ideal
Top management support to first time first line manager	TMSFT	Dedicated office for interacting with team members-Ideal
		Enrol in manager welfare Schemes-Ideal

To arrive at the FISS, the relative importance of each of the six contributing factors is calculated by dividing the variance extracted of each factor by the total variance extracted by the six factors together. Figure 3 shows the six factors resulting in FISS and their relative importance.

Using the relative importance as a base, the FISS is calculated for each respondent as below,

$$\text{FISS} = \{(0.406 \times \text{DEPCITM}) + (0.1405 \times \text{DCESCTM}) + (0.1285 \times \text{BNKTT}) + (0.1136 \times \text{PISPAS}) + (0.1069 \times \text{CSARNB}) + (0.1045 \times \text{DSDPB})\}$$

Scores arrived at using the above equation under both the ideal and actual scenarios are calculated. These scores are then subjected to the paired T test with following hypothesis,

Null Hypothesis	Ho: There exists no significant difference in scores for ideal and actual scenarios w.r.t. FISS
Alternate Hypothesis,	H1: There exists significant difference in scores for ideal and actual scenarios w.r.t. FISS
Level of Significance	5%

Table 14, the paired T test, comparing FISS in actual and ideal scenarios, shows significant differences in the ideal and actual FISS scores and the null hypothesis gets rejected. The difference is 0.298 on the scale of 5, with ideal FISS values being higher than the actual FISS values. This 6% difference indicates that most of the managers do take these required efforts in line with the six factors. In this sample the maximum FISS_Delta, i.e. the difference between the ideal and actual FISS scores, is 1.31 amounting to a 13.1% difference on the delta scale with a range of 10 viz. - 5 to + 5. This indicates that there exists a substantial scope of improvement in FISS scores in case of some FTFLMs.

Table 6. Cronbach's alpha.

Sr. No.	Factor	Cronbach's alpha
1	DEPCITM	0.912
2	ILAMS	0.802
3	DESCWTM	0.694
4	BNKTT	0.658
5	PISPAS	0.54
6	CSARNB	0.575
7	PTPBTTM	0.431
8	DSDPB	0.465
9	TMSFT	0.421

Management's on-boarding strength score (MOSS)

In three factors of the nine-factor model, the onus of action lies with the senior management and the human resource department of the organization. The efforts made by the senior management and the human resource department with respect to these three factors influences the performance of the FTFLM. Let us denote the level of the strength of such efforts as the MOSS. It is arrived at using similar calculations as those of FISS explained earlier. Figure 4 gives the relative importance of the components of MOSS.

Using the relative importance as a base, the MOSS for each respondent is calculated using the below formula,

$$\text{MOSS} = \{(0.4391 \times \text{ILAMS}) + (0.306 \times \text{PTPBTTM}) + (0.0682 \times \text{TMSFT})\}$$

Scores arrived at using the above equation under both the ideal and actual scenarios are then subjected to the paired T test with following hypothesis,

Null Hypothesis	Ho: There exists no significant difference in scores for ideal and actual scenarios w.r.t. MOSS
Alternate Hypothesis,	H1: There exists significant difference in scores for ideal and actual scenarios w.r.t. MOSS
Level of Significance	5%

Table 15 gives the paired T test, comparing the MOSS values corresponding to actual and ideal scenarios. The null hypothesis

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Table 7. Composite reliability.

Factor	Composite reliability
DEPCITM	0.930
ILAMS	0.885
BNKTT	0.854
DESCWTM	0.829
DSDPB	0.827
CSARNB	0.824
PISPAS	0.802
TMSFT	0.767
PTPBTTM	0.726

Table 8. Average variance extracted (AVE).

Factor	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BNKTT	0.745
ILAMS	0.720
DSDPB	0.707
CSARNB	0.701
PISPAS	0.673
TMSFT	0.626
DESCWTM	0.617
PTPBTTM	0.594
DEPCITM	0.571

Table 9. Fornell Larcker's criterion.

FACTOR	BNKTT	CSARNB	DEPCITM	DESCWTM	DSDPB	ILAMS	PISPAS	PTPBTTM	TMSFT
BNKTT	0.863								
CSARNB	0.185	0.837							
DEPCITM	0.392	0.118	0.755						
DESCWTM	0.287	0.221	0.424	0.786					
DSDPB	0.191	0.308	0.265	0.295	0.841				
ILAMS	0.400	0.120	0.590	0.271	0.189	0.849			
PISPAS	0.257	0.254	0.290	0.314	0.222	0.286	0.820		
PTPBTTM	0.116	0.182	0.087	0.147	0.185	0.123	0.225	0.771	
TMSFT	0.214	0.196	0.223	0.241	0.142	0.197	0.308	0.129	0.791

Table 10. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios.

Factors	BNKTT	CSARNB	DEPCITM	DESCWTM	DSDPB	ILAMS	PISPAS	PTPBTTM	TMSFT
BNKTT									
CSARNB	0.297								
DEPCITM	0.500	0.215							
DESCWTM	0.449	0.352	0.546						
DSDPB	0.327	0.511	0.388	0.476					
ILAMS	0.540	0.170	0.665	0.352	0.280				
PISPAS	0.433	0.426	0.400	0.538	0.402	0.403			
PTPBTTM	0.160	0.318	0.184	0.267	0.294	0.227	0.366		
TMSFT	0.383	0.425	0.342	0.385	0.332	0.299	0.579	0.358	

Table 11. Outer variance inflation factor (VIF) values.

Factor	Value	Factor	Value	Factor	Value	Factor	Value
AOGWSI	1.455	EMATRI	1.712	IITTMI	1.831	RTSNRI	1.082
CUNWSI	1.881	FCCIWI	1.317	ITDSTI	1.233	SROTFI	1.756
DOFTCI	2.404	FFMWSI	1.195	IUFTMI	2.094	SWSI	1.514
DOFTTI	4.021	IAITAI	1.317	OMIFMI	1.219	TEILSI	2.541
DOFTWI	3.123	IERCAI	2.811	PAATMI	1.809	TNATTI	1.195
DOITMI	1.078	IITCSI	1.575	PSTPMI	1.159	TNLNTI	1.082
EIMWSI	1.078	IITLSI	2.073	ROCSDI	1.219	FSSFRI	1.159

Table 12. Inner variance inflation factor (VIF) values.

Factor	BNKTT	CSARNB	DEPCITM	DESCWTM	DSDPB	ILAMS	PISPAS	PTPBTTM	TMSFT
BNKTT									
CSARNB									
DEPCITM									
DESCWTM									
DSDPB									
ILAMS	1.051	1.051	1.051	1.051	1.051		1.051		
PISPAS									
PTPBTTM	1.027	1.027	1.027	1.027	1.027		1.027		
TMSFT	1.053	1.053	1.053	1.053	1.053	1.000	1.053	1.000	

Table 13. The Nine Factors for the first-time first-line manager's (FTFLM's) performance improvement.

Variable	Variable code	Factor	Factor code
Develop ownership feeling towards team	DOFTT-I	Develop emotional-professional connect in team members	DEPCITM
Develop ownership feeling towards work	DOFTW-I		
Invest efforts root cause analysis	IERCA-I		
Develop ownership feeling towards company	DOFTC-I		
Take efforts improve listening skills	TEILS-I		
Publicly appreciate achiever team members	PAATM-I		
Inculcate unity feeling team members	IUFTFLM-I		
Ensure material availability team requirements	EMATR-I		
Shoulder responsibility of team Failure	SROTF-I		
Counsel unwilling nonworking subordinates	CUNWS-I		
Arrange occasional get-togethers with subordinates	AOGWS-I	Develop emotional-social connect with team members	DESCWTM
Socialize with subordinates	SWS-I		
Indicate things disapprove-of subordinates/team	ITDST-I		
Focus certificate course instead work	FCCIW-I	Bring new knowledge to team	BNKTT
Innovative approach instead traditional approach	IAITA-I		
Fulfil subordinate's shop-floor/field requirements	FSSFR-I	Passionately improve subordinates' performance and skills	PISPAS
Push subordinate's training proposals management	PSTPM-I		

Variable	Variable code	Factor	Factor code
Fault finding mission working subordinates	FFMWS-I	Closely supervise and reprimand negligent behaviour	CSARNB
Take non-achievers to task	TNATT-I		
Respond official communication same day	ROCSD-I	Develop self-disciplined professional behaviour	DSDPB
Office meetings instead field meetings	OMIFM-I		
Initial induction training leadership skill	IITLS-I	Impart leadership and managerial skills	ILAMS
Initial induction training team management	IITTM-I		
Initial induction training communication skills	IITCS-I		
Transfer new location new team	TNLNT-I	Provide transit period breather to team manager	PTPBTTM
Reduce targets settling new role	RTSNR-I		
Dedicated office interacting team members	DOITM-I	Top management support to FTFLM	TMSFT
Enrolled in manager welfare schemes	EIMWS-I

Figure 3.

Table 14. Paired 'T' test FTFLM in-boarding strength score (FISS) actual vs ideal.

		Paired samples test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired differences							
		Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	FISS_I - FISS_A	.298	.366	.034	.231	.365	8.830	117	.000

Figure 4.

Table 15. Paired 'T' test – Management's on-boarding strength score (MOSS) ideal vs actual.

		Paired samples test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired differences							
		Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	MOSS_I - MOSS_A	.66	.675	.062	.540	.786	10.665	117	.000

gets rejected as the test significance is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Hence, the difference in the two MOSSs is significant. The difference is 0.67 on the scale of 10 (delta of -5 to +5), with ideal MOSS values being higher than the actual MOSS values. This 6.7% difference indicates that most of the organizations do take these required efforts in line with the three factors. In this sample the maximum MOSS_Delta i.e. the difference between the ideal and actual MOSS scores is 2.9 amounting to a 29% difference. This indicates that there is substantial scope for improvement in MOSS scores in case of some organizations.

The analysis of FISS and MOSS for the FTFLMs and the organization in a case under study can be of great help in tracking the gap between expectations and reality. This will help the FTFLMs to be introspective and then focus on self-corrections/improvements in the required areas. The organizations should work towards plugging the identified gaps as well to help the FTFLMs to boost their performances.

Conclusions

Scope for future research

Different stages of the management hierarchy demand different modi operandi for performance improvement and gaining success. Hence the success models would be different for different levels of the hierarchy. These models need to be established in management literature.

Recommendations

The established nine factor model is a guideline for FTFLMs to achieve success in their new role as a Team Manager.

For the FTFLM. For the effective performance of the teams, the team members must be emotionally connected with the different aspects of their job. They must develop strong ownership feeling in the teammates, towards the company, towards the work at hand, and also towards the team. The FTFLM must work towards inculcating this behaviour in the teammates through their approach and behaviour. The FTFLM's passion and commitment slowly trickles down to the team members.

The FTFLM must lead the team to solve pressing problems using methods which involve teammates. This not only develops the team in decision-making capability but also the team's confidence in their manager strengthens. Also, the FTFLM must listen to the issues as well as suggestions of the teammates with total involvement and reciprocate accordingly. The FTFLM must show appreciation for performing team members in front of the entire team. The FTFLM must give all the necessary support to teammates, but should shoulder all the responsibility for failures. All this is possible only if the FTFLM themselves are emotionally connected to the team and its success and passionately strive to achieve it by putting aside all their ego and personal agendas. Along with being passionate about the work-related aspects, the manager must also ensure the good

mood and atmosphere always prevails in the team. The second factor is about developing emotional- social connect with the team members through occasional get-togethers with the subordinate team members and also getting involved in their personal and/or family occasions wherever possible. This creates a bigger social circle of influence for the FTFLM, which helps immensely in delicate situations at work. At the same time, the FTFLM must ensure that their social activities are not detrimental to the level of discipline at work by clearly setting rules on and off work and following them strictly.

The manager is regarded as the most intellectual of the team members; the FTFLM must fulfil this need by bringing new knowledge to the team and, if required, enrolling in courses/ activities for their improvement. The team members look forward to innovative solutions from the manager, and the FTFLM is obliged to provide them.

The FTFLM must ensure that the team members are trained sufficiently. Many times, this requires pursuing the senior management for resources, which the FTFLM must develop the courage to ask for and convince the department head and the senior management for its utility in improving team performance. It is a tough challenge, but the FTFLM must learn the art of getting such proposals through.

FTFLMs must learn techniques and develop a passion for closely observing the work of the subordinates and discussing this in detail with them. A fault finding and pointing attitude must be developed but with the good intention of helping the subordinate to improve their work and bringing recognition to the team or the department on account of flawless work output. At the same time, the FTFLM must display strictness and take stern actions against those who are habitual non-performers, for the sake of the overall benefit of the team.

The FTFLM must acquire professionalism and self-discipline. The FTFLM is judged by subordinates on one side, as well as their boss, colleagues, customers, and the senior management on the other side. Hence the FTFLM must always be on their toes ready to fulfil any official and/or administrative demand from their superiors.

Overall, 22 of the 118 responding managers (18.6%), gave their suggestions for budding FTFLMs. These ‘pearls of wisdom’ inspire the budding managers to be true, honest, sincere, focused, polite, empathetic, punctual, patient, genuine, open, a learner, change agents, hardworking, a good communicator, a good listener, self-motivated person and be the greatest inspirer for the team members. It also shows that these managers were really connected to the survey and some of them also shared their views by personally getting in touch, expressing their gratitude

for being given the opportunity to reflect back on their early days as managers and put the wisdom they earned to some constructive use.

For senior management and the human resource department. The senior Management, along with the human resource department, should effectively design the induction training of FTFLM to positively influence the FTFLM’s performance. The training must cover leadership and team management skills, along with an attempt to make the FTFLM develop the required soft skills to effectively manage the team. Also, the senior Management must give some space to the FTFLM to adjust with the team. The senior Management must extend the required support to the FTFLMs by providing necessary resources and fair treatment.

The below words of quality guru [W. Edwards Deming](#) are most apt for the FTFLM as well as the top management and human resource department,

‘It is not enough to do your best;
you must know what to do,
and then do your best.’

Data availability

Underlying data

Figshare: Experience Survey Transcripts. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14616966.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021a).

Figshare: FTFLM Survey Questionnaire. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14618505.v2> (Raulgaonkar, 2021b).

Figshare: FTFLM_Rawdata. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14617935.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021c).

Figshare: FTFLM_Variable_Coding. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14617956.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021d).

Figshare: FTFLM_Ideal_and_Actual_responses. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14617992.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021e).

Figshare: FTFLM_Responses_ideal. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14617995.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021f).

Figshare: FTFLM_Final33variables. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14618091.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021g).

Figshare: FTFLM_Final9factors. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14618097.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021h).

Figshare: FTFLM_9factormodel_PLResults. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14618100.v1> (Raulgaonkar, 2021i).

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Open Peer Review

Current Peer Review Status:

Version 1

Reviewer Report 20 September 2022

<https://doi.org/10.21956/emeraldopenres.15300.r28326>

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Annika Strömberg

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This article investigates what skills first-time first-line managers (FTFLM) need to be a good manager and to have the possibility to have a career as a manager. The results indicate what second-level managers need to do to make the FTFLMs develop in their role. The authors develop an instrument that is supposed to measure the success of FTFLMs. The conclusion is that six of the nine factors for a successful FTFLM lies in the hand of the FTFLMs. The remaining factors are influenced by the organization's procedures and policies.

Research has pointed out that the role of FLMs is important for the well-being and job satisfaction of the employees and we also know that the role is complex, being trapped in the middle of employees and top management. The article focuses a lot on teams and the development of teams. But the FLM role often also includes a lot of administration and budget responsibilities. This makes the role even more complex. This kind of complexity is not addressed in the article.

The results show important factors to take into consideration helping FTFLMs to grow into the role. The factors can be seen as generic in one way, but it could be important to problematise the fact that this can depend on the context. As the article is written now it states that one solution fits all. That means that there is an ideal image of what an FLM should be like. This has similarities to a positivist approach.

Other approaches are more likely to take the context into consideration. Different contexts have different needs. For example, in healthcare and academia, collegial governance ideals are an important part of leadership and something that FLMs have to handle. In these organisations, it is unlikely to think that the employees would agree that "The managers is regarded as the most intellectual of the team members " (p.19, paragraph 2). It can also be central to the FTFLM role if the organization is undergoing major changes or if it is more business as usual when entering the role.

Another aspect may be if the management approach in the organisation is top-down or bottom-up. Another example is that the preconditions for FLMs can vary. In some organisations the span

of control for FLMs can be over 50 employees, then it will be hard for the FLMs to "...learn the techniques and develop a passion for closely observing the work of the subordinates and discussing this in detail with them" (p.19, paragraph 4).

It would be an advantage for the reader of this article to know more about the context in which the FLMs included operates.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Partly

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

Yes

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Yes

Is the argument information presented in such a way that it can be understood by a non-academic audience?

Yes

Does the piece present solutions to actual real world challenges?

Yes

Is real-world evidence provided to support any conclusions made?

Yes

Could any solutions being offered be effectively implemented in practice?

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Leadership and business management

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 09 February 2022

<https://doi.org/10.21956/emeraldopenres.15300.r27845>

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Srinath Jagannathan

Indian Institute of Management, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India

The author describes the skills that first time first line managers (FTFLMs) need to do well in their jobs and rise in their careers. The author also describes the interventions that senior management and human resource departments need to make in order to enable FTFLMs to thrive. The author develops an instrument to measure the efficacy with which FTFLMs function. The instrument is developed by relying on a survey of managers who retrospectively reflect on their memories of being FTFLMs. The author presents the underlying factor structure of the instrument developed in the study.

Positivists are likely to regard that one of the weaknesses of the study is that it relies on the memories of managers about their experience as FTFLMs. How reliable are these memories likely to be when many years might have passed? Are these memories likely to be coloured by more recent experiences of managers? An account of descriptive statistics of the experience of informants would have been useful. It would also have been useful to know if experience had a statistical significant relationship with measures developed by the author.

Beyond positivism, I find that the study is invested in a fantasy of normatively structuring what a FTFLM should be doing. The image that the author constructs of an ideal FTFLM is that of a figure who balances compassion with the disciplinary capacity to reprimand. While the FTFLM is expected to socialize with team members, at the same time, the FTFLM is expected to maintain professional distance to maintain the sanctity of being impartial. This appears very close to the imagery of a father figure who cares for his children but is still willing to reprimand them if they go off track. The fantasy that workplaces need these father figure ideals is rooted in a desire for paternal order.

Labour process theorists and other critical scholars have noted that oppositional currents and resistance are constantly operating in the workplace. The author notes that tactics such as publicly appreciating achievers and taking non-achievers to task are likely to enhance productivity. This is an image of a manager as a harnesser of energies, as a relationally inspiring figure. At the same time, it is also a hierarchical image, an image lacking in collegiality and equality, an image that the manager knows more. Indeed, the author notes that the manager is supposed to be the primary intellectual figure in the team; unwittingly, at this juncture, the manager de-intellectualises others in the workforce; and it is around this quest for intellectual agency and the dignity it wields that resistance could occur.

While the FTFLM has a primary interface in the project of manufacturing consent, the cultural project of consent emerges from many sources. Today, the corporation is at the heart of the production of many inequalities and violences. It is useful to explore the situatedness of FTFLMs in the production of these inequalities. Do FTFLMs feel powerless in transforming business as usual in the corporation or have they culturally identified with the corporation so much that they are

unable to engage with the inequalities engendered by the corporation? The situatedness of FTFLMs in engaging with ethical crises inside the corporation requires greater exploration.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Partly

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

Partly

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Yes

Is the argument information presented in such a way that it can be understood by a non-academic audience?

Yes

Does the piece present solutions to actual real world challenges?

Yes

Is real-world evidence provided to support any conclusions made?

Yes

Could any solutions being offered be effectively implemented in practice?

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: critical management studies, labour studies

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Author Response 13 Feb 2022

Haresh Raulgaonkar, NMIMS University, Mumbai, India

Respected Srinath Jagannathan sir,
Greetings for the day!!

I am extremely privileged to have you as the first reviewer for my research paper. Thank you very much for your observations and comments.

Sir, you have pointed out a weakness in the study with regards to the Experience survey. Your view is that the responding managers have retrospectively stated memories of their FTFLM phase which might have got colored with their recent experiences and hence not completely reliable. I do agree that with time we do tend to forget some of our experiences. But sir I think some memories especially of first-time experiences may get activated from one's inner mind with properly designed and handled interview sessions. With that belief, I conducted these interview sessions. Sir, during the interview sessions the managers were able to recollect their experience of their initial phases as team managers and shared them with a good amount of detail. The audio recording of all the interviews is available but was not shared due to confidentiality and anonymity clauses. Sir, also, the variables which made up the final research instrument, were captured from two sources viz. this experience survey and the available literature. The final 9-factor model is the outcome of the EFA of the primary data collected using the questionnaire so developed.

I hope my explanation is up to your satisfaction.

In my future work I will definitely look into adopting methods to counter this issue pointed by you.

Thanking from bottom of my heart for your valuable inputs and guidance!!

Yours Sincerely
Haresh Raulgaonkar

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.