

# Impact of Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Coaching on Employee Learning

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## ABSTRACT

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), is the way how people interact and communicate with each other and the way they act and react to any situation depends upon what they have in their mind at that particular moment. Considering this, NLP is in general something that can help the organization to increase the performance and efficiency of their employees and the overall organizational effectiveness is enhanced. It is one of the major growing fields of human development, whether banking or Healthcare sector in many countries of the world. Unfortunately, not much work has been done in Pakistan in this field and there is not much awareness among the managers and employees in many sectors of Pakistan. Despite the benefits, the NLP has not been an integral part of the organizational culture. This study has been aimed to evaluate the impact of NLP coaching on employee learning, and for this study, employees from the banking sector were selected. Through NLP tool, employees perception toward better performance can be significantly enhanced.

**Keywords:** Neuro-Linguistic programming (NLP), Coaching, Employee learning, neuroscience

## INTRODUCTION

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is the science of getting control over your brain and exploring areas which are not yet explored by us in our entire life. In 1970's, NLP began at the University of California, Santa Cruz, CA, by two researchers; Richard Bandler, a master's level student of information sciences and mathematics, and Dr. John Grinder, a professor of linguistics. NLP gives us the freedom to create behaviors in ourselves, which we want, by either changing, adopting or eliminating different behaviors, as we desire and gives us the ability to choose the mental, physical, and emotional states of well-being<sup>1</sup>.

NLP is basically a science and an art towards personal excellence. It provides an individual with a set of basic tools which helps him overcome and change his non-supportive beliefs and behaviours for personal growth and satisfaction on and off the job<sup>2</sup>.

Coaching is defined as "A collaborative process of facilitating a client's ability to self-direct learning and growth, as evidenced by sustained changes in self-understanding, self-concept, and behavior." Just like coaching, NLP is also about change and about enhancing the performance<sup>3</sup>. NLP, by many, is considered to be a great source of influence on coaching and it is said the current best coaching practices have descended from NLP. However, coaching using NLP is quite a recent introduction to NLP's applications<sup>4</sup>.

In one of the studies by Ian Lavan on NLP, mentions importance of NLP in enhancing personal excellence. NLP is one of the strongest tools which could change not on individual levels but could be used to change the cultural norms, and these tools are used to create human excellence and genius. NLP examines the way we think, and it also helps the practitioners to explore and achieve goals and growth. Unlike many other learning tools and trainings, NLP provides understanding at the level of your beliefs, your attitude and the values that are most important to an individual. NLP can also help and motivate individuals in finding their true potentials<sup>5</sup>.

In one of the studies by David Pollitt et al., on the effects of NLP on employees of Metronet Rail maintenance, narrates that NLP focuses on human beings, and their interactions with others, and how they make sense out of experiences. Through NLP training, an individual develops skills on how to interact with others, by improving and providing awareness on their thought processes, their behaviours, and the language they use. Pollitt said that the skills individual workers acquired through the course helped them learn and develop team members to deal with different changes occurring both at their personal levels and also supported their colleagues and customers<sup>6</sup>.

NLP helps in storing different beliefs and assumptions and thoughts at the location in your brain where you exactly want them to be stored and used as a happy stroke in future when required. She narrates there is a presupposition associated with NLP that there are specific physical locations in our brain that stores our beliefs, and

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when we think about any specific belief, we can actually become mentally aware of the physical position of that belief in our brain. So, once we get this awareness of the physical location of any belief in our brain, we can actually accept the positive ones, which we may have previously rejected, or reject those negative ones which we may have unjustifiably accepted in the past.<sup>7</sup>

Lisa Wake in her article on NLP Programming, declares NLP to be associated with applied psychology and is related to performance and states that it is gaining visibility in the business world. She talks about different tools and models that can be used in a certain organization depending upon its requirements<sup>8</sup>.

NLP has been found to enhance the performance by reducing the below average performance. This paper talks about NLP to aid Total Quality Management. They have identified 5 Sigma and Kaizen as lateral thinking tools using NLP<sup>9</sup>.

The biggest issue with NLP is its name which somehow has a negative impression especially the last part. NLP is a powerful, influential tool but can also be considered manipulative by many. If in the wrong hands it can become manipulative but if stays in the hands of the right people can do wonder. The positivity or negativity of it totally depends on the intentions of the user<sup>10</sup>.

Eric Kong in his research studies the impact of NLP Coaching on Human Capital. According to him if an individual is aware of his preferred ways of learning, his learning process will be more natural, quick and

comparatively easy. If the learning method used for an individual is one that is preferred by him, his learning will help him to develop and utilize new knowledge which will not only help in increasing his performance but will also add to the organizational value<sup>11</sup>.

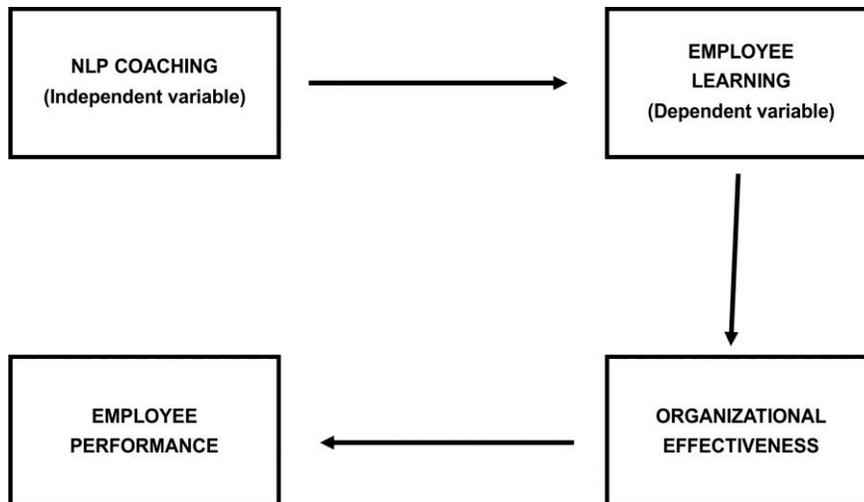
**Objective of the study:** This study has been carried out to attain the following objectives:

- a. To study NLP coaching and mechanisms and to understand how it creates an impact on employee learning aptitude.
- b. To understand the philosophy of NLP in organization settings.
- c. To understand the relationship between NLP coaching and organizational training programs.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The study was conducted to measure the NLP among the managers, and supervisors within the organization. The data collection for the research purpose was taken from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected by a survey method using a structured questionnaire on NLP and its impact on employee learning. Secondary data was collected from various journals/articles, blogs, and websites like Human Capital, nlp.com, neurolinguisticprogramming.com, nlp.com, nlp-pakistan.com.

**Research framework:**



**Hypothesis:** H<sub>0</sub>: NLP coaching has no significant impact on employee learning. H<sub>1</sub>: NLP coaching has a significant impact on employee learning.

**Data Analysis:** In this study banking sector of Pakistan is chosen as population. It's a service sector which enforces employees to interact with each other. The major foreign banks of the private sector in Pakistan are selected as a sample to carry out the research. The data for NLP Coaching and its effect on employee learning was collected with the help of a questionnaire. A questionnaire measuring NLP Coaching's effect on employee performance was

distributed among the employees of different banks. These respondents were people working in managerial positions carrying out different duties. A total of 100 questionnaires were circulated. The response rate was 74%. The convenient sampling method was used to gather data for this research. The data containing the information related to respondents regarding their ages, gender, and education is shown in the following tables:

The questionnaire used contained 15 items in total. NLP Coaching was measured using 13 items whereas two items were used to measure Employee Learning. The

respondents were asked to evaluate their ability to maximize performance with NLP depending upon their experiences. A scale of 1-4 was used for that. Where one meant never, and four meant always. 2 & 3 referred to occasionally and frequently, respectively. The Employee learning was measured on a scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). The scales also demonstrated excellent reliability as evidenced by the high Cronbach's alphas of 0.82 for NLP coaching and 0.70 for employee learning scale.

Correlation and regression analyses were undertaken to measure the significance between NLP Coaching and employee learning.

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Age in years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
20-25	13	17.6%
26-30	34	45.9%
31-35	20	27.0%
36-40	5	6.8%
41-45	2	2.7%
Total	74	100.0%

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	56	75.7%
Female	18	24.3%
Total	74	100.0%

Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Bachelors	19	25.7%
Master	55	74.3%
Total	74	100.0%

**RESULTS**

The results show that NLP coaching has a significant effect on employee learning. Through NLP tool employees' perception toward better performance can be significantly enhanced.

There are no control variables in the study. The means, standard deviations, and correlations for all the variables included in this study are shown in the following table.

**Reliability Statistics**

Table 2: Reliability statistics

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
All	.803	15
NLP	.827	13
Learning	.704	2

Cronbach Alpha is the most widely used scale for checking the internal consistency of the instrument. The acceptable range of Cronbach Alpha is above .6 which means that the instrument used is reliable and can be further processed for the analysis. Alpha value for overall instrument containing all the variables is .803 which is considered very good.

Internal consistency represented by Cronbach Alpha can be calculated at two levels; overall instrument and variable by variable, i.e., construct by the construct. Considering the construct of NLP, the Alpha value of NLP construct is .827 which is very good as well. Learning construct which serves as the dependent variable has the

Cronbach Alpha value of .704, all the values of Alpha show that instruments used in this study are quite reliable, and thus data analysis can be further continued.

**Correlations:**

Table 3: Correlations

		NLP Coaching	Employee_ Performance
NLP_ Coaching	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.325**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	74	

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

Correlation analysis is conducted to see the combined movement in the data about two entities. It is obtained by dividing the covariance of the two variables by the product of their standard deviations. Correlation values range between the +1 and -1. Correlation of NLP Coaching and Employee Performance is .325 which shows that relationship between NLP Coaching and Employee Performance is positive and is moderately strong. It shows that as the value in the NLP coaching increases so does in the Employee Performance. The significant value presented here as the p-value is highly significant. One percent level which shows the confidence level in the data.

**9.2 Regression:**

Table 4a: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.325a	.106	.093	.59044

Predictors: (Constant), Employee Performance

Regression is used in the analysis to assess the causality of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Causation through regression is differentiated from correlation by the ability to assess the direction of causality from independent variable to dependent variable. In this research, NLP coaching is taken as the independent variable while the employee performance is the dependent variable. Regression analysis reflects the R-Square value as .106 which shows that explanation reflected by independent variable into the dependent variable is almost 11 percent. This explanation is relatively small, but considering the new concept of NLP in Pakistan, this figure can be considered acceptable.

Regression analysis results are significant and positive, which is reflected by the significance level of 1 percent. T-value is also quite good with 2.91. This regression result points towards the fact that NLP coaching significantly and positively influences the Employee Performance. The impact of NLP coaching on employee performance is by .325 units and .411 units, which presents that if the NLP coaching is increased by one unit, the increase in the performance of employees would be around .411 units as an unstandardized coefficient and by .32 units as a standardized coefficient. The difference in

standardized and unstandardized coefficients is marked by the assumption that the standardization of variables is achieved or not. Normally, social sciences phenomena cannot be standardized, as such, due to their complexity

and subjective nature. So, it is considered better to evaluate the regression coefficient as an unstandardized coefficient.

Table 4b: Regression Model (Coefficients) <sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.570	.401		6.411	.000
	NLP Coaching	.411	.141	.325	2.919	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

**Appendices:**

Frequencies

Statistics				
		Age	gender	education
N	Valid	74	74	74
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		2.3108	1.2432	1.7432
Median		2.0000	1.0000	2.0000
Mode		2.00	1.00	2.00

Frequency Table

Education				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelors	19	25.7	25.7	25.7
Masters	55	74.3	74.3	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

**DISCUSSION**

NLP is an emerging field of coaching, and now it is commonly used for transformation of faith of poor performers to that of good performers. In organizations in Pakistan, NLP coaching has not yet been practiced, and there is no significant evidence available to identify whether NLP coaching can create an impact on employee learning aptitude. The main aim of NLP coaching is to increase and maximize individual's (employee's) abilities in responding to different situations resourcefully, by providing them with increasing choices.

Our study showed reasonable reliability as evidenced by the high Cronbach's alphas of 0.82 for NLP coaching and 0.70 for employee learning scale which shows the interrelationship of items selected very strong. Correlation and regression analyses were undertaken to measure the significance between NLP Coaching and employee learning. The methods used to determine outcomes, however, appeared to be of significant at both the individual and organizational levels. Other methods, beyond the scope of an introductory program, were discovered that included meta-mode questioning techniques and methods of "reframing." The programs confirmed that it was possible to use NLP without undertaking expensive certification training, but that it would be necessary to undertake master practitioner training to teach NLP to others.

NLP, through its set of techniques and methods, makes us understand ourselves better and teaches us how to communicate with others effectively<sup>12</sup>. It helps us better cope with stress especially in highly stressful professions

like nursing<sup>13</sup>. The techniques of NLP can be used by any person who lacks confidence and wishes to perform at his/her optimum level<sup>14</sup>.

NLP has been taken up as regular training and improvement of the employees in many countries of the world [15]. So, in Pakistan, serious efforts need to be put to increase the awareness level of NLP and its understanding and its incorporation in the corporate level. Initial response forms many managers and bankers were like as if they are listening to a completely new field which never existed for them. But after making them understand the main objectives and expected outcomes of NLP, they understood the value NLP could emphasize the importance of its use in many areas of employee development as well as organizational development. There are still many areas in this field which needed to be explored yet and need to do aggressive research considering the local needs and demands and their incorporation with NLP to attain the maximum expected benefits from it.

Despite all the hype and the results of the NLP, Pakistan has very limited NLP experts in the country, and these experts mostly do not relate to the management sciences especially the human resource management. So, in our opinion, there is a huge gap in this field where the productive capacity of NLP needs to be explored and integrated into the employees learning within the organization and its overall effect in the increased well-being of the individual and the growth of the organization.

**LIMITATION OF STUDY**

The main limiting factor of the study was that it was only confined to one industry (Banking sector of Pakistan) in order to determine the impact of NLP coaching on employee learning. At the same time, it only considers the managers and supervisors in banks of Rawalpindi and Islamabad region.

Another limitation to this study was the absence of the number of the experts in the field of NLP. In Pakistan, the numbers of the experts who can teach and train the employees at the organizational level are very scarce. So, to carry out training in such field is indeed very difficult.

**CONCLUSIONS**

NLP is one of the major growing fields of human development whether banking or Healthcare sector in many countries of the world but unfortunately not much work has been done in Pakistan in this field and there is not much awareness among the managers and employees in many sectors of Pakistan. When dealing with specific

techniques, the tentative conclusions drawn from previous inquiries were confirmed to some extent. The value of using both language and behavioral matching to improve communication came through strongly. Other variables like trainer's expertise, financial aspects of the training, ethical and moral linking of NLP coaching, and the future of NLP in Pakistan, opens perspective opportunities for future research. Incorporation and facilitation of flexible organizational systems in many sectors of Pakistan are required so that newer fields like NLP coaching can be incorporated and benefited from more efficiently.

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