

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION IN PROMOTING EMPLOYEES OPENNESS TO CHANGE: MEDIATING ROLE OF TRUST IN SUPERVISOR

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Abstract

This paper is based on exploring how managers' communication with employees and employees' participation in decision making plays its role for promoting their openness towards change through a mediator i.e. trust in supervisor. This research is conducted within the context of public sector schools working in Punjab province of Pakistan. Structured questionnaire was used as a source of data collection. 397 questionnaires were distributed randomly among teachers of public schools in Pakistan. Hypotheses were tested by using SEM. Findings supported that all the variables (managerial communication, employee participation, and trust on supervisor) showed significant impact upon openness of organizational workforce towards change process. Moreover, the influence of employee participation and managerial communication on employee's openness towards accepting change is partially mediated via 'trust in supervisor'. This study provide insight to leaders or supervisors who are more close to workers that which factors (such as employee participation and managerial communication) play significant role for overcoming resistance from employees in the era of change.

Keywords: Employee Participation, Managerial Communication, Trust in Supervisor, Openness to Chang, Education.

JEL Classification: Z000

Introduction

Organizations are facing intense changes in their external environments over the past decades. So due to an indication of such large-scale and insightful changes in the global environment, change and alteration cannot be dealt as an option; it is now vital for achieving the enduring accomplishments and success of global businesses (Myrtle et al., 2008).

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For meeting the competitive environment of this global era education is one of the most suitable options. It was mentioned by Kazmi (2004) that development of human beings can be done through educating them. Memon (2007) also identified that there exists a close relation between education and relative development but the developmental signs in Pakistan, after more than five decades, are not showing affirmative and positive results. To deal this problem, article 25-A form the “Constitution of Pakistan” make the government responsible for providing high quality education, free of cost to all children who fall in age category of 5-16 years (Ali, 2015). So, government is playing critical and vital role in making quality education affordable and accessible through interventions in public sector of education. Change is promoted in public sector by delivering quality, affordability and sustainability in education for the masses of Pakistan (Change in Education, 2013).

Marvelous and wonderful efforts are made which are aimed at improving access to education for this, incentives are provided including provision of free textbooks, missing infrastructure and stipends are provided to the girl students to increase their enrolments (Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme). Furthermore, government of Pakistan has taken the initiative to start a ‘4-year literacy’ program through which free education will be provided to approximately three million children, who have very poor family background along with special focus on girls to make education accessible for them (Farooq, 2014). Public schools of province Punjab are targeted for this research because public sector schools have been performing poorly in comparison with the private schools from the past many years. In the recent years, government intervention has taken place and government has promoted changes in order to make education available to even the lowest class.

Moreover, the basic phenomenon understudy in this research paper is the role of managerial communication (MC) and employee’s participation (EP) in promoting their openness towards change through the mediating role of supervisory trust in public schools of Punjab, Pakistan. The issue under consideration is important mainly because trust in supervisor, is an important issue in an organization to bring change, and without giving employees empowerment to make decision and informing them about changes going to take place in organization, change is unlikely to take place. According to Asgari, Ahmadi, and Jamali (2015) mutual interconnectedness and trust worthiness between individuals working together in a particular work process, develop a very motivating culture of the organization, which in turn enhances total performance, consequently resulting in a steady excellence of an organization. As indicated by Magner et al. (2011) that an organization can build its employees trust on their supervisors by allowing them to participate give suggestions while making any decision, as well as, the perceived effectiveness of communication between management & employees and trust were significantly related to each other (Zeffane et al., 2011). To bring openness to change among employees, ensuring participation of employees in decision making process (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), communication with management (Lautner, 1999) and trust in supervisor (Devos & Buelens, 2006) are key ingredients.

Problem Statement

A study conducted in 2009 highlighted problems that public sector schools were facing including large number of students, poor results, poor performance of heads in respect of decision making and leading, inappropriate behavior and motivation of teachers, poor capability to enhance creativity among students, lack of computer labs and old curriculum (Imran, 2011). Currently the issues such as communication with management, managerial trust and commitment are getting importance yet studies examining the interaction between all of these three variables are lacking (Zeffane et al., 2011). So the problem statement is formulated as:

How communication from the side of managers and participation from the side of employees helps in promoting workforce openness towards accepting change through the mediating role of supervisory trust in public schools of Pakistan?

Objective

Main aim of this research is: To examine the influence of communication from managers and participation from employees in promoting employee's acceptance towards change through the mediating role of trust on supervisor in public schools of Pakistan.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Employee Participation

The term employee participation was used as "a voice of the employees in decision making process" (Delaney, 1996). Whereas, it is also defined as "a process of employee involvement designed to provide employees with the opportunity to influence and where appropriate, take part in decision making on matters which affect them" (CIPD, 2009). In many countries the term participation looks as if it is grounded on a difference in the powers and roles of employers and with their workforce, each having their specific set of accountabilities and responsibilities (Arrigo & Casale, 2010). Participation is considered to be equally effective for both managers and lower level employees as well as there is no difference in manufacturing, service, and research firms, in term of taking advantage through the usefulness of participatory behaviour by their employees (Miller & Monge, 1986). Employee's participation play self-effacing role for the acceptance of situation (Wagner & Gooding, 1987). According to Rodda (2007), the increased participation of employees and supervisory support are proved to be positive predictors of employee's openness to change. Also, participation while making any decision is vital contributor in building the employees feeling of satisfaction with supervisor and with work (Schuler, 1980). Moreover, employee participation in the process of change brings positive effects for organization whereas the degree of employee participation is predicted by perceived participation opportunities, supervisory support and constructive change attitudes which

were integrated into one scale (Antoni, 2004). Therefore, it is expected that;

H1: Participatory behavior of employees has significant influence on employees' openness towards accepting change.

H2: Participation from employees has significant influence on building trust in their supervisors.

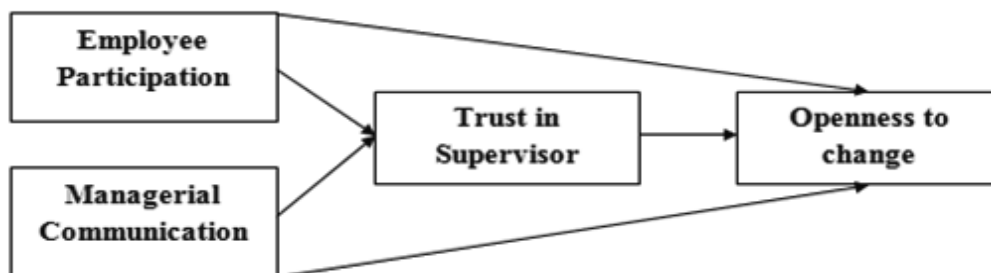


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

Managerial Communication

The communication is considered important in the change process as it was indicated by Neves and Eisenberger (2012) that managerial communication with their employees have positive relationship with the temporal change in perceived organizational support (POS). Particularly the results of another study on human resource management (HRM) suggest that direct discussion and consultation between higher management and employees is important element in the major change processes (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Moreover, change-related communications are essential for creating readiness for change in an organization (McKay, 2012), as well as, communication and trust are the strongest associated variables (Zeffane et al., 2011). According to Kelloway and Chawla (2004) it is revealed that managerial communication can directly or indirectly influence openness to change. Therefore, it is expected that;

H3: Managerial communication has significant influence on openness of employees to accept change.

H4: Communication from managers has significant influence on employees' trust in their supervisors.

Trust in Supervisor and employees' Openness towards Change

Openness of workers towards accepting the change is an important component for bringing change. Armenakis and Bedeian (1999), state that openness to change (OTC) can be defined as "an individual's adaptation to the dynamic and diverse global business environment". Whereas, according to Shin (2012), employee openness to change is due to two factors: one is his/her own psychological resilience while inducements from organizations size also play a positive role.

Trust-in-supervisor can be defined in term of employee tendency to trust and supervisors

own attributes such as his ability, integrity and generosity (Poon, Rahid, & Othman, 2006). For building the trust of employees direct leaders or supervisors play particularly important role (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). It is mainly because employees trust on their supervisors or leaders has been considered as a valuable tool behind the positive outcomes of an organization (Hassan et. al., 2012). Therefore, it is expected that;

H5: Employee's trust in their supervisors has strong influence on employee's openness towards accepting change.

Trust in Supervisor as a Mediator

Openness of employees towards the change is derived from the context-specific variables such as information received about changes and involvement of workers in the PDM i.e. process of making decision regarding upcoming changes (Wanberg & Banas, 2000) and trust on supervisor and executive management (Devo & Buelens, 2003). It is suggested that management of organizations should encourage their employees to have a) active participation & involvement in organizational PDM, b) build confidence and c) communicate transparently about the need for change (Boohene & Williams, 2012).

Ariani and Ebrahimi (2005) also suggest management that it is better to give employees opportunity to contribute in the process of making decisions and also revealed through survey results that employee participation and managerial communication have significant relation with trust in organization and these measures can also improve employees trust in leaders and top managers. Trust is an essential feature while developing the communication relationship (Wulandari & Burgess, 2010), as well as, the trust in supervisor play a role of mediator between communication provided by management and employees openness to accept change within organization (Ribbers, 2009). According to Mahajan et al. (2012) trust in top management play a role of mediator between managerial communication and OC i.e. organizational commitment act as a partial mediator between employee involvement and organizational commitment. Survey results of another study showed that trust on supervisor can fully mediate the effect of MC on workers' openness to accept organizational change and it can partially mediate the relationship between openness to change (OTC) and employee participation (Ertürk, 2008). Therefore, it is hypothesized that;

H6: Trust on supervisor play mediatory role between participation of employees and their openness towards accepting change.

H7: Trust on supervisor play mediatory role between communication from managers and workers openness towards accepting change.

Methodology

Research Approach

For this research, assumption underlying in the positivism approach was followed because the main aim is to investigate those factors which play important role for promoting employees' openness to change in education sector i.e. to investigate the role of MC and EP in promoting employees' OTC through a mediator i.e. trust in supervisor in public schools of Pakistan. As, it was suggested by Creswell (2003) that "if the problem is to find out the factors that can influence outcome or to test theory or explanation, then positivism (quantitative approach) is most suitable". Therefore, this research was carried out using survey method and source used was questionnaire (close ended questions) for data collection and statistical analysis for drawing results of this research (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Sampling Design

Zikmund (2003) defined sampling as "The process of using a small number of items or parts of a larger population to make conclusions about the whole population". Data for this study was collected from education sector (public schools) of Punjab, Pakistan which has undergone changes in terms of its affordability and availability. There are total 57418 public schools in Punjab, Pakistan which are divided as higher secondary, high, middle, MPS, primary and sMosque schools (School Education Department- Government of Punjab, 2015). Formula of Yamane (1967) was used, i.e. $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$, where n = sample size, N = Population (57418), e = margin of error (0.05), is applied to determine the sample size. After applying the formula, sample size was determined to be 397 schools. Total 397 questionnaires were distributed randomly among the schools mentioned above. Principle of the targeted school was requested to fill the questionnaire on behalf of school to represent the true system of the school. Total 325 questionnaires were filled and returned; out of which 300 (75.5 percent) was usable response.

Instrument for Data Collection

For this study questionnaire technique of field survey was used for collecting data from respondents.

Measures

The questionnaire of this research contains information regarding following measures.

- Background information
- Openness to change
- Managerial communication

- Employee participation
- Trust in supervisor

Managerial communication was measured with the help of three dimensions i.e. communication responsiveness, task and career communication. These dimensions were measured by adopting a scale developed by Penley and Hawkins (1985). Employees' participation was measured by adopting a well calibrated scale developed by Ashford (1988). Supervisory trust was measured by adopting a scale which was developed by Nyhan and Marlowe (1997). Openness to change was measured by scale adapted from Desrosiers (2006). All of the scales used to measure the constructs under study, were 'Five Point Likert-type' scales.

Data Analysis

Statistical Techniques

The multivariate statistics was used to analyze the data, which was collected through questionnaire. Reliability of the data collected in this research study was measured by using Cronbach's Alpha. Following the Reliability analysis of the data, descriptive statistics (Frequency) was used to gain insight about data. After this, structure equation modeling technique was used in order to check the relationship among variables i.e. to verify hypothesis.

Reliability Test

Reliability of data collected via questionnaires was ensured through Cronbach's Alpha technique. Cronbach's Alpha was estimated for each individual construct as well as at collective level.

Table 1
Reliability Statistics

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha
Openness to Change	0.78
Trust in Supervisor	0.89
Employee Participation	0.85
Managerial Communication	0.82
Whole Questionnaire	0.94

Cronbach's Alpha for all of the variables is given in Table 1 which range between 0.89 - 0.78. These values are well above the cutoff point of Cronbach Alpha.

Descriptive Analysis

One hundred and eighty respondents (180) out of 300 were male (60 %) and 222 respondents were married (74 percent). Nine respondents had Inter degree (3 percent), eighty-four respondents (28 %) had Bachelor's educational qualification and 205 respondents had Master's degrees (68 %).

Results

Structural model fitness was assessed by examining the variety of fit indices. For the hypothesized model of this research study, the value of (CMIN/DF) is 2.287, GFI and AGFI indices are 0.974 and 0.961 respectively. CFI value equals to 0.977 and RMSEA is 0.056. All indices met the criteria of their recommended values; therefore, hypothesized model (i.e. relationship of MC and EP with employees' OTC through mediating variable, trust in supervisor) is acceptable.

Table 2

Criteria for goodness of Fit

Criteria of Goodness for Structural Model								
	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Model Values	466.531	204	.000	2.287	0.974	0.961	0.977	0.056
Recommended				≤ 3	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≤ 0.05

According to Table 2, criteria for measuring the goodness of fit stands within acceptable range. Hence this model is found fit for prediction due to its validity.

Hypothetical Analysis

Hypothetical analysis reveal that there is positive and significant relationship of employee participation with openness to change ($\beta = .327$, $t = 3.083$, $p < 0.05$) and with trust in supervisor ($\beta = .154$, $t = 2.051$, $p < 0.05$); thus, supporting the hypothesis H1 and H2 respectively. In H3 it was hypothesized that managerial communication influence employees' openness to change. Results reveal support for this stated relationship ($\beta = .512$, $t = 3.975$, $p < 0.05$) and therefore H3 is accepted in this research. Findings also indicated that variation in employee's trust in their supervisors is being explained by managerial communication ($\beta = .510$, $t = 5.852$, $p < 0.05$); thus supporting H4. Moreover, it is also found that variation in employee's openness to organizational change is being caused by employee's trust in their supervisors ($\beta = .484$, $t = 8.657$, $p < 0.05$); hence, proved H5 of this research. The path coefficients proposed relationships in the model of study are reported in the Table

3 and Figure 2.

Table 3
Results Summary

Hypothesis	DV	IV	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P	Results
H1	OTC	EP	.327	.106	3.083	.002	Supported
H2	TIS	EP	.154	.075	2.051	.040	Supported
H3	OTC	MC	.512	.129	3.975	***	Supported
H4	TIS	MC	.510	.087	5.852	***	Supported
H5	OTC	TIS	.484	.056	8.657	***	Supported

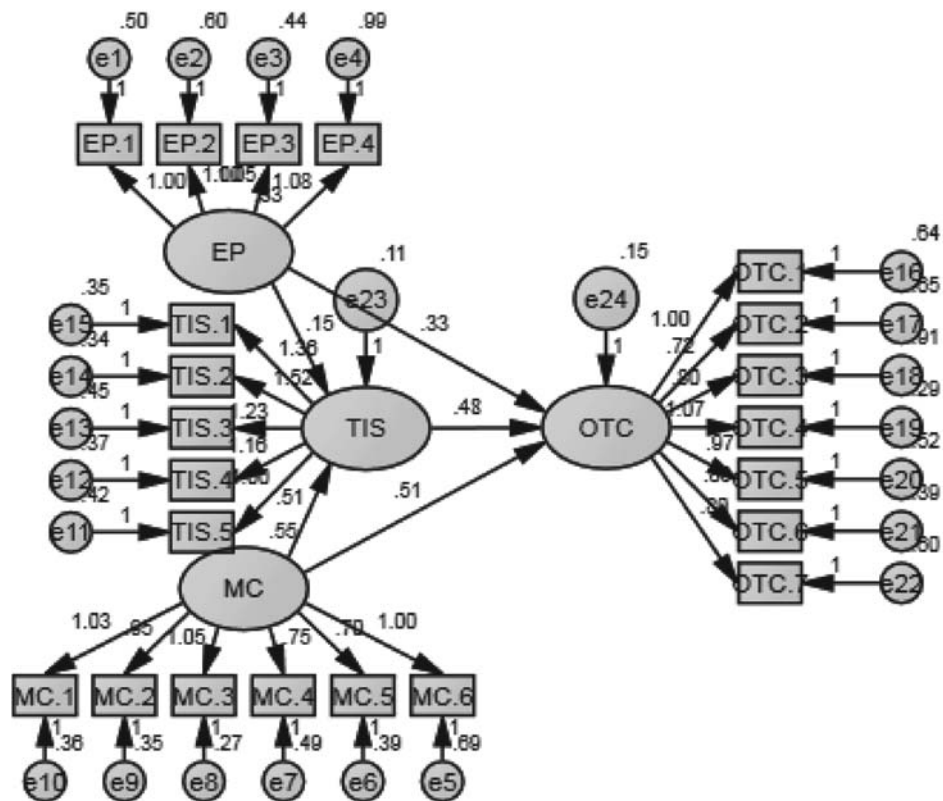


Figure 2: Path coefficients Diagram

Note: OTC= *Openness to Change*; TIS= *Trust in Supervisor*; EP= *Employee Participation*; MC= *Managerial Communication*.

Mediation Analysis

H6 proposed that effect of participation on openness to change is mediated through their trust in supervisors. The effect of mediation is checked according the process outlines by Baron and Kenny (1986). Accordingly, it is said that mediation occurs through four conditions. First, the independent variable (employee participation) must affect the mediator (trust in supervisor) which is proved by H2; second, mediator must affect dependent variables (openness to change) while controlling for independent variable which is proved by H5; third the IV (employee participation) must affect the DV (openness to change) which is proved by H1; and fourth, the beta coefficient between the IV (EP) and DV (OTC) should either reliably reduce the effect or it can become non-significant when the mediator effect is included. β value without mediator was 0.703 but after including mediator i.e. trust in supervisor β value of employee participation was reduced to 0.667 indicating that mediation has occurred but the value has not reached zero showing that partial mediation has taken place.

In order to check the significance of mediation, Sobel test was applied. T-value of Sobel test was 2.549 and p-value was found to be $0.010 < 0.05$ indicating a significant role of mediation. So H6 is supported. Similarly, H7 proposed that the effect of managerial communication on employees' openness to organizational change is mediated through employee's trust in their supervisors. This hypothesis is also proved according to the process outlines by Baron and Kenny (1986). The first three conditions of mediation as proposed by H7 are fulfilled above (i.e. can be seen in H3, H4 and H5) and to prove fourth condition, β value without mediator was 0.712 but after including mediator i.e. trust in supervisor β value for managerial communication was reduced to 0.672 indicating that partial mediation has taken place. In order to check the significance of mediation, Sobel test was applied. T-value of Sobel test was 3.074 and p-value was found to be $0.002 < 0.05$ indicating a significant role of mediation. Hence, the results provide support for the H7. These findings clarify the relationships between communication, participation, employee's trust on their supervisors and their openness to accept change. Moreover, these findings also provide insight about the mediating role of employees trust on their supervisor.

Discussion

Analytical finding of this research proposed that employees' openness to change is function of several influences. Findings supported that communication; participation and trust appear to have a highly significant impact on OTC. Moreover, effect of MC and EP on their openness towards accepting change is partially mediated through trust on their supervisors. Consistent with the findings of Rodda (2007), it is proved that increased participation of employees is a significant predictor of employee's OTC. Consistent to the studies of (Antoni, 2004), this study proves that employee partici-

pation is based on the supervisory support and trust. This study also proves that there is a positive association among MC and employee's OTC as was proved by (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). This study also supports a positive relationship between managerial communication and workers' trust in their supervisors which is comparable to the study conducted by Zeffane et al. (2011). Consistent to the findings of (Hassan et al., 2012), it is proved that significant relationship exists between employee's trust in their supervisors and positive outcomes of an organization (i.e., employee's openness towards accepting change).

This study has proved that effect of EP on OTC is mediated through employee's trust in their supervisors as proved by Wanberg and Banas (2000) and Devo and Buelens (2003). Consistent to the findings of Ertürk (2008), this study proves that MC influence on openness for accepting change is mediated through employee's trust in their supervisors. This study finds out the implication of the change adopted and its results and also demonstrate that what role it can play in informing public sector schools about the current situation and further changes that they can make for the betterment of their system. This study also provides suggestions for those organizations which undergo from the large scale change. Most importantly it suggests that employee's reaction towards change matters a lot in the situation of implementing change. The findings highlight the role MC and EP in influencing employee responses towards change. Workforce may be more prompted to the openness of change by a resource close to them (e.g., supervisor) so trust in supervisor is integral to the key findings.

Mediation effect of supervisory trust between the openness to accept change with managerial communication and with employee participation is most important. Research in the area of change can guide organizational leaders or supervisors who are more close to workers to obtain a better understanding of factors which can bring change by overcoming resistance from employees. Few limitations to be discussed here includes, 1) limited generalization due to limited targeted population area wise i.e. only one province of Pakistan. Hence, it can be eliminated via conducting it in future by considering larger sample. This study is cross sectional in nature, however, to evaluate the effect of EP and MC on employees' openness towards accepting change via trust, it is suggested that longitudinal studies can be conducted. It is because change is the core of any business and no business can survive in the dynamic environment by being rigid. It also tells how communication and participation can play an effective role in accepting and implementing change and what the organizations can do to bring employee's openness towards change.

Implication of the study

This study is important because it provides insight to leaders or supervisors who are more close to workers that which factors (such as EP and MC) are significant for overcoming resistance from employees in the era of change. This study also increases the understanding of how participatory behavior of employees in taking decision and managerial communication about important matters helps in promoting employees' openness towards accepting change via building trust among them.

Moreover, this research adds an insight into the literature through exploring shared effects of employee participation, managerial communication on employees' openness towards accepting organizational change in the presence of supervisory trust, especially within different cultural perspective i.e. Pakistan.

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Appendix

Regression Estimates

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
TIS	<---	EP	.154	.075	2.051	.040	
TIS	<---	MC	.510	.087	5.852	***	
OTC	<---	TIS	.484	.056	8.657	***	
OTC	<---	EP	.327	.106	3.083	.002	
OTC	<---	MC	.512	.129	3.975	***	
Employee_Participation_1	<---	EP	1.000				
Employee_Participation_2	<---	EP	.997	.193	5.154	***	
Employee_Participation_3	<---	EP	1.045	.192	5.435	***	
Employee_Participation_4	<---	EP	1.085	.226	4.804	***	
Managerial_Com_Cr2	<---	MC	1.000				
Managerial_Com_Cr1	<---	MC	.703	.100	7.046	***	
Managerial_Com_C2	<---	MC	.749	.109	6.864	***	
Managerial_Com_C1	<---	MC	1.053	.120	8.744	***	
Managerial_Com_T2	<---	MC	.948	.115	8.210	***	
Managerial_Com_T1	<---	MC	1.030	.123	8.377	***	
Trust_in_Supervisor_5	<---	TIS	1.000				
Trust_in_Supervisor_4	<---	TIS	1.159	.166	6.962	***	
Trust_in_Supervisor_3	<---	TIS	1.234	.180	6.861	***	
Trust_in_Supervisor_2	<---	TIS	1.518	.199	7.631	***	
Trust_in_Supervisor_1	<---	TIS	1.361	.184	7.408	***	
Open_1	<---	OTC	1.000				
Open_2	<---	OTC	.723	.138	5.245	***	
Open_3	<---	OTC	.805	.160	5.039	***	
Open_4	<---	OTC	1.066	.143	7.469	***	
Open_5	<---	OTC	.970	.148	6.561	***	
Open_6	<---	OTC	.892	.133	6.726	***	
Open_7	<---	OTC	.803	.140	5.746	***	