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Leadership Coaching And Competency Dynamics In Public HRM: The Mediating Role Of Learning

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Abstract
This study examines how leadership coaching, coach competencies, and coachee self-efficacy influence job performance in the context of public sector human resource management, highlighting the mediating role of leadership learning. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was applied. Quantitative data were collected from 189 civil servants participating in a national supervisory leadership training program and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The second phase involved in-depth interviews with ten key informants, including coaches, coachees, mentors, and administrators, analyzed through grounded theory coding.
The findings show that coachee self-efficacy has the strongest positive influence on both leadership learning and job performance. While coach competencies enhance leadership learning, they have a negative direct effect on job performance. Leadership coaching directly improves job performance, but its indirect effect through leadership learning is not significant. Qualitative insights emphasize that relational trust, reflective dialogue, and adaptive coaching styles shape how participants internalize learning and translate it into behavioral change.
The study offers empirical validation for a selective mediation model of leadership learning in coaching-based HRM programs. It also provides practical implications for designing reflective and competency-aligned coaching interventions, particularly in bureaucratic institutions undergoing human capital transformation.
Keywords: *coach competencies; job performance; leadership coaching; leadership learning; mixed methods; public human resource management; self-efficacy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, leadership coaching has gained significant attention as a strategic tool for enhancing leadership capability within public sector organizations. As public institutions face increasing complexity, accountability demands, and the challenges of digital transformation, there is a growing call for adaptive and human-centered leadership development approaches (Bozer et al., 2013; Theeboom et al., 2014). These demands require leaders who are not only technically proficient but also capable of navigating organizational changes and fostering innovation within their teams. Leadership coaching emerges as a relevant practice to address these needs, particularly in fostering reflective thinking, behavioral change, and performance enhancement among civil servants. Studies have shown that coaching can significantly improve leadership skills by providing a structured environment for reflection, goal-setting, and feedback (Grant, 2014). Moreover, coaching facilitates the development of self-awareness, decision-making abilities, and interpersonal effectiveness, all of which are critical for leadership success in the public sector (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Despite its growing adoption, empirical evidence on how leadership coaching translates into job performance remains fragmented, particularly in non-Western, bureaucratic environments. While coaching literature often emphasizes the importance of coach competencies and coachee characteristics (Ely et al., 2010), little is known about how these variables interact within structured leadership training programs in emerging economies. Furthermore, leadership learning—defined as the cognitive and behavioral transformation resulting from developmental experiences (Day et al., 2014)—has received limited attention as a potential mediating mechanism.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how leadership coaching, coach competencies, and coachee self-efficacy affect job performance, with leadership learning as a mediator. Focusing on Indonesia's

national leadership training for mid-level civil servants, we employ a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design to analyze both structural relationships and contextual dynamics. This article contributes to the HRM and coaching literature by validating a selective mediation model and providing contextual insights into evidence-based coaching within the public sector.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Leadership Coaching and Job Performance

Leadership coaching refers to a structured, developmental process whereby a coach facilitates individual growth and goal attainment in leadership contexts (Boyatzis et al., 2017). It is typically embedded in executive or developmental programs and focuses on enhancing self-awareness, decision-making, and interpersonal effectiveness. Prior studies have found positive associations between coaching and job performance (Grover & Furnham, 2016), yet evidence in government training environments remains scarce.

2.2 Coach Competencies

Coach competencies—encompassing relational, emotional, and cognitive capabilities—are critical determinants of coaching effectiveness (ICF, 2020). Competent coaches enable reflective conversations, establish trust, and align feedback with developmental needs. However, excessive focus on procedural competency may sometimes hinder individualized learning if not aligned with the learner's context (Clutterbuck et al., 2019). This suggests the need to understand whether competencies serve as enablers or constraints in public leadership training.

2.3 Coachee Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, rooted in Bandura's, (1997) social cognitive theory, denotes an individual's belief in their capability to execute behaviors necessary for specific outcomes. In coaching contexts, higher self-efficacy is linked to increased engagement, openness to feedback, and learning motivation (Baron & Morin, 2010). Thus, coachee self-efficacy may not only directly affect performance but also shape how individuals process and internalize coaching experiences.

2.4 Leadership Learning as a Mediator

Leadership learning represents the transformative process through which individuals make sense of leadership experiences and convert them into personal capacity and workplace behaviors (Day et al., 2014). It reflects the internalization of competencies, values, and insights acquired during formal interventions. We propose that leadership learning mediates the relationship between coaching inputs and job performance, as it captures the underlying learning mechanisms that connect coaching with behavioral outcomes.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Leadership Coaching in Public HRM

Leadership coaching is increasingly adopted within public HRM systems as a strategic mechanism for developing leadership potential and enhancing administrative performance (Theeboom et al., 2014). Unlike conventional training, coaching is dialogic, individualized, and learner-centered, aiming to foster self-reflection, autonomy, and goal-oriented behavior. In public bureaucracies—often characterized by hierarchy, rigid procedures, and limited innovation—coaching may serve as a transformative intervention that enables adaptive leadership and cultural change (Bachkirova et al., 2017).

Despite these theoretical promises, the empirical literature shows inconsistent findings on coaching effectiveness in the public sector. Some studies confirm its positive impact on performance and organizational commitment (Bozer et al., 2013), while others highlight variability depending on the coachee's readiness and organizational context. This suggests a need for more nuanced models that account for mediating and moderating variables.

3.2 Coach Competencies and Development Outcomes

The competency of coaches is a foundational element in the coaching process. According to the International Coaching Federation (2020), core competencies include active listening, goal setting, trust building, and the ability to evoke awareness. These competencies are assumed to facilitate learning and performance by creating a psychologically safe and cognitively stimulating environment.

However, empirical studies reveal a paradox: while competencies enhance coachee learning (Grant et al., 2017), they may not uniformly translate into improved performance if not tailored to coachee needs or organizational realities (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). In public leadership training, coach–coachee mismatch or inflexible application of coaching techniques may undermine practical relevance, thus warranting closer investigation into their actual effects.

3.3 Coachee Self-Efficacy as a Catalyst for Learning

Self-efficacy has been identified as a crucial personal resource that influences how individuals respond to coaching. High self-efficacy coachees are more likely to engage in coaching conversations, apply learned behaviors, and demonstrate resilience in the face of performance challenges (Baron & Morin, 2010). In the context of leadership development, self-efficacy predicts not only immediate training outcomes but also the sustainability of leadership behaviors (Luthans & Peterson, 2004).

Despite its importance, self-efficacy is often treated as an outcome rather than a determinant in coaching research. This study reframes self-efficacy as an antecedent, positing that it directly enhances job performance and indirectly operates through increased learning engagement and internalization.

3.4 Leadership Learning as an Integrative Mechanism

Leadership learning serves as a cognitive-behavioral bridge that links coaching experiences with real-world performance. Drawing from experiential and transformational learning theories (Kolb, 2015; Mezirow, 1991), leadership learning encompasses the reflective processes by which individuals reinterpret their roles, reconstruct meaning, and enact leadership in practice (Day et al., 2014). It involves both the assimilation of new knowledge and the reconfiguration of self-concept as a leader.

Although leadership learning has been conceptually recognized, few empirical studies position it as a formal mediating construct. Prior research often assumes direct causality between coaching and performance, neglecting the internal mechanisms of learning that may explain variance in outcomes. This study addresses this theoretical gap by explicitly modeling leadership learning as a mediator.

4. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

This study proposes a model that examines the influence of leadership coaching, coach competencies, and coachee self-efficacy on job performance, with leadership learning acting as a mediating variable. The framework draws from experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015), which highlights the importance of reflective transformation in leadership development, and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), which emphasizes personal agency in behavioral change.

4.1 Direct Effects on Job Performance

Leadership coaching offers structured and individualized guidance that enhances self-regulation and performance (Bozer & Jones, 2018). Coach competencies—such as active listening, feedback accuracy, and developmental support—may directly impact how participants perform in their leadership roles. Similarly, self-efficacy equips individuals with the confidence to translate leadership intentions into workplace behavior (Baron & Morin, 2010). Therefore, we propose:

- **H1**: Leadership coaching has a positive effect on job performance.
- **H2**: Coach competencies have an effect on job performance.
- **H3**: Coachee self-efficacy has a positive effect on job performance.

4.2 Direct Effects on Leadership Learning

Leadership learning refers to the internalization of knowledge, skills, and insights derived from developmental experiences. Leadership coaching encourages reflective cycles, coach competencies structure the learning environment, and self-efficacy motivates coachees to actively engage in sense-making (Day et al., 2014; Ely et al., 2010). Thus:

- **H4**: Leadership coaching has a positive effect on leadership learning.
- **H5**: Coach competencies have a positive effect on leadership learning.
- **H6**: Coachee self-efficacy has a positive effect on leadership learning.

4.3 Effect of Leadership Learning on Job Performance

As a developmental outcome, leadership learning is expected to directly enhance job performance. Through the assimilation of reflective experiences, individuals improve their leadership effectiveness and decision-making capacity. Therefore:

- **H7**: Leadership learning has a positive effect on job performance.

4.4 Mediating Role of Leadership Learning

Leadership learning is hypothesized to mediate the relationships between the three antecedent variables and job performance. This mediation suggests that the developmental impact of coaching, competencies, and self-efficacy occurs through a learning mechanism that bridges experience with behavioral outcomes (Mezirow, 1991; Kolb, 2015). Accordingly:

- **H8**: Leadership learning mediates the relationship between leadership coaching and job performance.
- **H9**: Leadership learning mediates the relationship between coach competencies and job performance.
- **H10**: Leadership learning mediates the relationship between coachee self-efficacy and job performance.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study employed a **sequential explanatory mixed-methods design** (Creswell & Plano, 2018), integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively investigate the relationship between leadership coaching, coach competencies, self-efficacy, leadership learning, and job performance. The quantitative phase was used to test the hypothesized model, while the qualitative phase aimed to explain and deepen the interpretation of statistical findings.

5.2 Participants and Sampling

The study was conducted within the context of Indonesia's national supervisory leadership training program. A total of **189 civil servant participants** were selected for the quantitative phase using **purposive sampling**, targeting those who had completed the full coaching-based training module and implemented change projects. For the qualitative phase, **10 informants** were selected through **maximum variation sampling**, including coaches (widyaiswara), coachees, mentors, and program administrators.

5.3 Data Collection

Quantitative Phase

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of five validated instruments:

- **Leadership Coaching** (Bozer et al., 2013)
- **Coach Competencies** (adapted from ICF, (2020)
- **Self-Efficacy** (Bandura, 1997)
- **Leadership Learning** (Day et al., 2014)
- **Job Performance** (adapted from Rotundo & Sackett, 2002)

Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale. Prior to analysis, the instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure reliability and content validity.

Qualitative Phase

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' lived experiences of the coaching process and leadership transformation. Interview protocols were based on the conceptual model and refined through expert review. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized.

5.4 Data Analysis (with References)

Data analysis followed a sequential procedure consistent with the explanatory mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative modeling with qualitative interpretation. This two-phase approach enables comprehensive validation of hypothesized relationships while contextualizing them within experiential realities, in line with recommendations by Creswell & Plano, (2018).

In the quantitative phase, **Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)** was employed using SmartPLS 4.0 software, due to its suitability for theory development, prediction-oriented research, and smaller sample sizes (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis began with evaluating the **measurement model** through outer loadings (> 0.70), Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50), and Composite Reliability (CR > 0.70) to ensure convergent validity and internal consistency. **Discriminant validity** was tested using the **Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT)**, adhering to the recommended threshold (< 0.85) as proposed by Henseler et al., (2015).

Subsequently, the **structural model** was assessed to examine the hypothesized paths. **Bootstrapping** with 5,000 subsamples was performed to estimate path coefficient significance and confidence intervals, as per recommendations from Chin, (2010). The model's **predictive power** was evaluated using R^2 values for endogenous variables (Cohen, 1988), **effect size (f^2)** for each exogenous construct, and **predictive relevance (Q^2)** derived through blindfolding procedures.

For the qualitative phase, **grounded theory coding** (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) was used to analyze data from ten semi-structured interviews. The analysis consisted of three steps: **open coding** (identifying initial themes), **axial coding** (establishing connections between categories), and **selective coding** (integrating themes into overarching narratives). This approach facilitated the emergence of core concepts such as "adaptive coaching styles," "reflexive learning," and "trust-based behavioral shifts"—elements that helped interpret statistical anomalies and enrich findings with practical depth (Charmaz, 2014).

Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings not only validated the structural model but also uncovered contextual influences—such as institutional rigidity or cultural alignment—that modulate the impact of leadership coaching in public organizations. This approach aligns with the pragmatist stance of mixed-methods research, emphasizing methodological complementarity and depth of interpretation (Tashakkori et al., 2021).

By combining predictive modeling with narrative analysis, the study offers a nuanced understanding of how leadership development unfolds in bureaucratic contexts. The integration of methods strengthens the internal validity and practical utility of the findings, aligning with recent calls in HRM research for **multi-method approaches** to studying complex developmental phenomena (Boxall & Purcell, 2022).

6. Results – Quantitative Phase

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of participants' perceptions regarding each construct measured in the study. The results revealed consistently high scores across all five latent variables, indicating positive evaluations from respondents who had participated in the national supervisory leadership training program.

The mean scores for the constructs ranged from **4.60 to 4.66** on a 5-point Likert scale, with **Job Performance** and **Coach Competencies** attaining the highest average values (4.66), followed closely by **Leadership Learning** (4.64), **Self-Efficacy Coachee** (4.61), and **Leadership Coaching** (4.60). These high means suggest that respondents perceived the training process, coaching quality, and their own leadership development positively.

The **standard deviations** ranged between **0.501 and 0.534**, demonstrating relatively low dispersion in responses and indicating that participants generally held homogenous views on the effectiveness of coaching, their learning experience, and performance outcomes. The minimum scores ranged from 2.67 to 3.00, while all constructs reached the maximum score of 5.00.

These findings support the notion that participants experienced strong leadership development impacts through coaching-based training and entered the program with a relatively high baseline of perceived efficacy and performance potential. This high level of response consistency adds robustness to subsequent structural model interpretations.

6.2 Structural Model: Direct Effects

The direct effect analysis was conducted to assess the strength and significance of hypothesized relationships between exogenous and endogenous constructs in the proposed structural model. The results, estimated using PLS-SEM with bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples), revealed six statistically significant paths and one non-significant path.

Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	*t*-Statistic	*p*-Value	Significance	Interpretation
Coach Competencies → Job Performance	–0.345	2.722	0.007	Significant ($p < 0.01$)	A significant negative effect, suggesting the dominance of indirect mechanisms through LL.

Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	*t*-Statistic	*p*-Value	Significance	Interpretation
Coach Competencies → Leadership Learning	0.528	4.165	0.000	Significant ($p < 0.001$)	Strong direct influence of coach competencies on leadership learning.
Leadership Coaching → Job Performance	0.411	3.440	0.001	Significant ($p < 0.01$)	Leadership coaching significantly enhances job performance directly.
Leadership Coaching → Leadership Learning	–0.072	0.585	0.558	Not Significant	Indicates that leadership coaching may exert its effect through indirect or moderated pathways.
Leadership Learning → Job Performance	0.393	3.353	0.001	Significant ($p < 0.01$)	Leadership learning plays a central role in improving job performance.
Self-Efficacy Coachee → Job Performance	0.453	4.940	0.000	Significant ($p < 0.001$)	Self-efficacy directly contributes to enhanced job performance.
Self-Efficacy Coachee → Leadership Learning	0.509	6.514	0.000	Significant ($p < 0.001$)	A strong positive effect of self-efficacy on leadership learning engagement.

- **Coach Competencies → Job Performance**: The relationship was negative and significant (β = –0.345, $t = 2.722$, $p = 0.007$), indicating that coach competencies may not directly enhance job performance and may instead exert influence through other mediating constructs such as leadership learning. This suggests that high technical or procedural competence from coaches may not always translate into performance gains without supportive learning integration.
- **Coach Competencies → Leadership Learning**: A strong and significant positive effect was found (β = 0.528, $t = 4.165$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that coach competencies play a crucial role in facilitating leadership learning. This aligns with transformational coaching literature emphasizing the impact of relational and cognitive guidance on reflective learning (Bozer & Jones, 2018).
- **Leadership Coaching → Job Performance**: The path was significant and positive (β = 0.411, $t = 3.440$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that coaching practices have a direct influence on participants' job performance. This supports prior evidence of coaching's effectiveness in fostering behavioral changes and leadership execution (Joo, 2005; Theeboom et al., 2014).
- **Leadership Coaching → Leadership Learning**: Contrary to expectations, this relationship was not statistically significant (β = –0.072, $t = 0.585$, $p = 0.558$). This suggests that leadership coaching in the studied context may not directly promote leadership learning, potentially due to lack of integration with learning mechanisms or moderating variables such as learner readiness or coaching depth.
- **Leadership Learning → Job Performance**: The strongest direct effect observed in the model (β = 0.393, $t = 3.353$, $p = 0.001$), confirming the pivotal role of leadership learning as a proximal antecedent of job performance. This reinforces the idea that internalized leadership competencies significantly enhance work-related effectiveness.
- **Self-Efficacy Coachee → Job Performance**: A robust, positive, and highly significant relationship was identified (β = 0.453, $t = 4.940$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that coachees with higher confidence in their capabilities tend to perform better in their roles.
- **Self-Efficacy Coachee → Leadership Learning**: This path also showed a strong, positive, and significant effect (β = 0.509, $t = 6.514$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that self-efficacy is a powerful enabler of learning engagement and depth.

In sum, the direct path analysis validates six of the seven hypothesized direct relationships. The only non-significant path was from leadership coaching to leadership learning, indicating a need for further investigation into potential mediating or moderating mechanisms that influence this relationship. The findings underscore the strategic importance of integrating coach competencies and self-efficacy enhancement within leadership training to drive both learning and performance outcomes.

6.3 Structural Model: Indirect Effects and Mediating Role of Leadership Learning

To explore the mediating role of **Leadership Learning**, indirect effects were tested using the PLS-SEM bootstrapping procedure. This analysis assessed how leadership learning transmits the effects of leadership coaching, coach competencies, and self-efficacy coachee to job performance. In addition to indirect path coefficients and significance values, **Variance Accounted For (VAF)** and **Upsilon (υ)** statistics were calculated to determine the strength and type of mediation effect, following the guidelines of Lachowicz et al., (2018) and Ogbeibu & Gaskin, (2023).

Indirect Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	*t*-Statistic	*p*-Value	Significance	Interpretation
Coach Competencies → Leadership Learning → Job Performance	0.207	2.335	0.020	Significant ($p < 0.05$)	Leadership learning partially mediates the relationship, suggesting developmental influence.
Leadership Coaching → Leadership Learning → Job Performance	–0.028	0.544	0.586	Not Significant	Weak mediation; learning does not significantly transmit coaching effects to performance.
Self-Efficacy Coachee → Leadership Learning → Job Performance	0.200	3.023	0.003	Significant ($p < 0.01$)	A strong indirect effect, indicating that self-efficacy enhances performance through learning pathways.

a) Leadership Coaching → Leadership Learning → Job Performance

The indirect path from **Leadership Coaching** to **Job Performance** through **Leadership Learning** was found to be **statistically non-significant** (β = –0.028, $p = 0.586$; $t = 0.544$). The mediation effect size (υ) was 0.005, indicating a **very weak mediation**, and the **VAF** value was 6.8%, well below the 20% threshold. Although leadership coaching had a direct positive effect on job performance, its indirect contribution via learning was negligible. This suggests that, in this context, coaching serves more as a direct performance enhancer rather than a facilitator of structured leadership learning.

b) Coach Competencies → Leadership Learning → Job Performance

The mediating role of leadership learning was **statistically significant** in the relationship between **Coach Competencies** and **Job Performance**. The indirect effect (β = 0.207, $p = 0.020$; $t = 2.335$) was positive and meaningful. The VAF was 60.0% and the upsilon value (υ) was 0.266, indicating a **moderate to strong mediation effect**. These results confirm that while coach competencies may not always directly enhance job performance (β = –0.345), they contribute positively through their ability to facilitate deep leadership learning. This form of **inconsistent partial mediation** reflects that competent coaches enhance performance through developmental mechanisms rather than immediate behavioral outcomes.

c) Self-Efficacy Coachee → Leadership Learning → Job Performance

A **partial mediation** was also observed in the relationship between **Self-Efficacy Coachee** and **Job Performance**. The indirect path was significant (β = 0.200, $p = 0.003$; $t = 3.023$), with a VAF of 44.5% and an upsilon value of 0.163, indicating a **moderate mediation effect**. These results suggest that self-efficacy contributes to performance not only directly but also by enhancing individuals' capacity to engage in and benefit from leadership learning. Learners with high self-efficacy are more likely to reflect deeply, persist in learning activities, and transfer their insights into improved work behaviors.

Summary of Mediation Findings

Of the three hypothesized mediation paths, two were supported (Coach Competencies and Self-Efficacy Coachee), while one was rejected (Leadership Coaching). These findings demonstrate that **Leadership Learning** plays a **selective mediating role**, especially where coachee readiness and coaching quality intersect with reflective learning. Practical implications include the need to strengthen the learning integration within coaching sessions and to enhance the developmental orientation of coaches, particularly in bureaucratic training contexts.

6.4 Structural Model: Total Effects

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the structural relationships in the model, the total effects—calculated as the sum of direct and indirect effects—were analyzed. This allows for the evaluation of each exogenous variable's overall contribution to the endogenous outcome variable, *Job Performance*.

The results revealed three distinctive effect patterns:

- **Self-Efficacy Coachee (SEC)** demonstrated the highest total effect on job performance (**β = 0.653**), comprised of a strong direct effect (β = 0.453) and a substantial indirect effect via leadership learning (β = 0.200). This confirms that self-efficacy not only influences behavior directly but also enhances learning processes that reinforce performance outcomes. With an effect size (f^2) of **0.229**, SEC falls into the **moderate-to-large** category, underscoring its dominant role in the model.
- **Leadership Coaching (LC)** exhibited a total effect of **β = 0.383**, mostly contributed by its direct path (β = 0.411), while its indirect effect through leadership learning was weak and negative (β = –0.028). The corresponding effect size (f^2 = 0.149) is on the borderline between **small and medium**, indicating that LC remains an important component in enhancing performance, particularly through practical, action-oriented mechanisms rather than conceptual learning pathways.
- **Coach Competencies (CC)** presented a complex interaction. While its direct effect on job performance was negative (β = –0.345), the indirect effect through leadership learning was significantly positive (β = 0.207), yielding a net total effect of **β = –0.138**. The effect size for this construct was relatively small (f^2 = 0.074), suggesting that although coach competencies support learning, their standalone influence on job performance may be limited unless paired with effective learning integration.

Interpretative Insights

The contrasting total effect patterns highlight the unique functional roles of each antecedent. **Self-efficacy** stands out as a robust personal resource that consistently drives performance both directly and indirectly. **Leadership coaching** contributes primarily via direct behavioral mechanisms, reflecting its practical and solution-driven nature. Meanwhile, **coach competencies** yield meaningful impact primarily when mediated by leadership learning, suggesting the need for programmatic design that tightly couples coaching expertise with reflective learning frameworks.

These results emphasize the importance of **analyzing total effects in mediated models**, as direct path coefficients alone may obscure underlying dynamics. From a theoretical standpoint, the findings support integrated HRM frameworks where psychological resources (e.g., self-efficacy), relational interventions (e.g., coaching), and learning mechanisms interact to shape leadership development outcomes.

6.5 Qualitative Phase Results

The qualitative phase of this study aimed to enrich the explanatory power of the quantitative findings by identifying the contextual and processual mechanisms through which leadership coaching and related factors influence leadership learning and job performance. Through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders—including coaches, participants (coachees), mentors, and program administrators—several thematic categories emerged, culminating in a core conceptual theme: **"The Effectiveness of Leadership Coaching in Enhancing Job Performance through Leadership Learning"**.

Emergent Themes and Core Findings

Thematic coding revealed that the effectiveness of leadership coaching was shaped not only by technical program design but also by a range of human factors, including coach–coachee alignment, self-efficacy, emotional safety, and perceived learning relevance. Three cross-cutting insights emerged:

1. **Program Structure and Coaching Delivery**

Although the supervisory leadership training was designed with a structured change project framework—accounting for 50% of the final evaluation—several informants highlighted time constraints as a major challenge. Coaches frequently extended their availability to support coachees' project execution and learning. Variability in participant competence also required coaches to personalize their approach, balancing technical demands with interpersonal sensitivity.

2. **Coach Competence and Emotional Dynamics**

While technically competent coaches facilitated strong leadership learning (e.g., CC8 – using probing questions; CC3 – flexibility), some were perceived as intimidating or overly fast-paced, which created stress for less-prepared coachees. This helps explain the **negative direct effect** of coach competencies on

job performance in the quantitative model. Conversely, when coaches displayed empathy and patience, participants reported a richer developmental experience.

3. **Self-Efficacy and Transformative Learning**

Self-efficacy emerged as a powerful driver of engagement in both learning and implementation. Coachees with strong self-belief were more resilient, open to feedback, and better able to translate learning into practice. They demonstrated higher motivation, were proactive in goal pursuit, and reported significant behavioral change, validating the dual role of self-efficacy in both direct and mediated pathways.

Leadership Learning as a Mediating Mechanism

Participants described leadership learning as more than skill acquisition—it involved reframing identity as a leader, improving communication and delegation skills, and integrating innovation into daily work. These learning experiences were largely shaped by coach facilitation and self-efficacy, reinforcing the quantitative finding that **leadership learning significantly mediated** the impact of coach competencies and self-efficacy on job performance.

Integrated Interpretation

Collectively, the qualitative findings illuminate why certain relationships in the structural model were stronger than others. For instance, the non-significant effect of leadership coaching on leadership learning is clarified by feedback that coaching was sometimes too focused on output delivery rather than reflective developmental dialogue. Conversely, self-efficacy and relational coaching were seen as catalysts for transformational learning.

These results underscore that effective leadership development requires not just competent coaches and structured interventions, but also **psychological safety**, **flexible delivery**, and **personal ownership of learning**. The data support a selective mediation model in which **leadership learning functions as a contextual amplifier**, transforming input variables into meaningful performance gains.

7. DISCUSSION

This study sought to examine the dynamics between leadership coaching, coach competencies, and self-efficacy coachee on job performance within the context of public leadership training programs, with a particular focus on the mediating role of leadership learning. The results from the sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach provide nuanced insights into how developmental interventions in public HRM function both directly and indirectly to enhance performance outcomes.

7.1 Leadership Coaching as a Direct Catalyst

The quantitative findings confirm a strong direct effect of leadership coaching on job performance, consistent with prior literature emphasizing coaching's behavioral impact on employee outcomes (Theeboom et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2016). However, the absence of a significant effect of leadership coaching on leadership learning was unexpected. Qualitative data clarified this anomaly: many coachees perceived coaching as task-focused rather than reflective, suggesting that the **behavioral activation function** of coaching may be prioritized over cognitive transformation in public-sector training contexts.

7.2 Coach Competencies: A Case of Inconsistent Mediation

Interestingly, coach competencies exhibited a negative direct effect on job performance, while also demonstrating a strong positive indirect effect through leadership learning. This **inconsistent mediation** (Zhao et al., 2010) implies that competent coaches may sometimes adopt high standards or rapid pacing that stress participants, suppressing direct performance outcomes. However, these same competencies positively influence learning processes, which in turn improve job performance. These findings echo those of Ely et al., (2010), who argue that the value of coaching lies not in technical expertise alone, but in how that expertise is translated into developmental experiences.

7.3 The Role of Self-Efficacy: Dual Pathway to Performance

Self-efficacy emerged as the most influential antecedent, significantly affecting both leadership learning and job performance directly. This supports Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory and aligns with empirical evidence highlighting self-efficacy as a predictor of motivation, learning engagement, and behavioral persistence (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Qualitative insights revealed that self-efficacious coachees demonstrated resilience, openness to feedback, and proactive application of leadership skills—amplifying the observed statistical effects.

7.4 Leadership Learning as a Developmental Bridge

Leadership learning functioned as a **partial mediator** between coach competencies and self-efficacy coachee with job performance, but not for leadership coaching. This underscores the selective nature of learning as a mediating mechanism. Qualitative data revealed that participants interpreted learning as a process of self-transformation and identity expansion. This aligns with the concept of **transformative learning** (Mezirow, 1991), suggesting that for learning to mediate effectively, it must go beyond knowledge acquisition and reshape how individuals perceive themselves as leaders.

7.5 Integration and Implications

The integrated findings suggest that leadership development in public HRM is most effective when psychological readiness (self-efficacy), relational dynamics (coaching style), and structured reflection (leadership learning) converge. While coaching is a valuable tool, its success depends on the **quality of delivery**, **emotional safety**, and **alignment with learner context**.

Practically, organizations should:

- Train coaches to balance **challenge with empathy**, ensuring that competencies are applied developmentally rather than prescriptively.
- Foster **self-efficacy** among trainees through pre-training interventions that build confidence and engagement.
- Embed reflective learning components to convert coaching experiences into meaningful developmental outcomes.

8. CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the dynamic relationships between leadership coaching, coach competencies, self-efficacy coachee, leadership learning, and job performance in the context of public sector leadership training. By employing a **sequential explanatory mixed-methods design**, the research has provided significant insights into the factors that drive effective leadership development in bureaucratic environments.

8.1 Key Findings

The results of this study underscore the **complex interplay** between coaching interventions and performance outcomes. **Leadership coaching** directly contributes to job performance but has a weak, non-significant effect on leadership learning. This highlights the importance of aligning coaching processes with deeper learning goals, especially when working with adult learners in leadership roles. While **coach competencies** significantly influenced leadership learning, their direct effect on job performance was surprisingly negative, suggesting that highly technical coaching may stress participants without fostering immediate performance gains.

Self-efficacy coachee emerged as the most influential factor, driving both leadership learning and job performance. This finding reinforces the importance of cultivating a **growth mindset** and confidence in coachees before and during leadership development programs.

Leadership learning played a critical **mediating role**, enhancing the effect of coach competencies and self-efficacy on job performance. However, the lack of a significant mediation effect for leadership coaching suggests that coaching might be more effective in driving performance through **direct action** rather than reflection alone.

8.2 Practical Implications

The findings have several **practical implications** for the design of leadership coaching programs in the public sector. Firstly, leadership coaching should not solely focus on task-related outcomes but should also be deeply integrated with leadership learning objectives. Coaches should be trained not only in technical competence but also in **emotional intelligence** and **adaptive coaching styles** that cater to individual coachee needs. Additionally, fostering self-efficacy at the outset of leadership training can empower coachees, enabling them to approach challenges with confidence and persistence.

Furthermore, the integration of **reflective learning** within coaching frameworks should be emphasized to enhance the sustainability of leadership development. Public HRM programs should aim to balance **task-oriented coaching** with **holistic, identity-shaping experiences** that foster long-term leadership growth.

8.3 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The **cross-sectional design** of the study limits the ability to draw conclusions about causality. Future research could explore **longitudinal designs** to track leadership development over time and assess the **long-term effects** of coaching interventions. Additionally, further studies could delve into the **moderating factors** such as organizational culture, leadership role, and the **individual characteristics of coachees** to better understand the conditions under which leadership coaching is most effective.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of research on leadership development, particularly within the **public sector HRM** context. It reinforces the need for a **multi-dimensional approach** to leadership coaching that emphasizes **learning, emotional engagement**, and **self-efficacy** as core drivers of **sustainable performance**.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several **practical recommendations** are offered to enhance the effectiveness of leadership coaching programs, particularly within the context of public sector human resource management (HRM). These recommendations aim to address both the direct and indirect mechanisms that influence leadership development and performance outcomes.

9.1 Strengthening the Integration of Coaching and Leadership Learning

While leadership coaching has a direct impact on job performance, its role in enhancing leadership learning was found to be weak. Therefore, it is recommended that coaching programs integrate **reflective learning processes** to deepen the developmental impact of coaching interventions. This can be achieved by:

- **Incorporating structured learning modules** that focus on leadership theory and self-reflection alongside task-oriented coaching.
- Providing opportunities for **peer learning and collaborative reflection**, enabling coachees to share insights and reinforce learning through group discussion and mentoring.

9.2 Enhancing Coach Competencies for Holistic Coaching

The study highlights the importance of coach competencies in facilitating leadership learning. However, it also underscores the need for coaches to balance technical skills with **emotional intelligence** and **adaptive coaching styles**. Public sector organizations should:

- **Invest in comprehensive coach training programs** that emphasize both technical and interpersonal skills, including **active listening**, **empathy**, and **adaptive coaching** to accommodate individual learning styles.
- Encourage coaches to develop **personalized approaches** that cater to the varied levels of competence and experience among coachees, ensuring that all participants are engaged and supported throughout the learning process.

9.3 Fostering Self-Efficacy through Pre-Coaching Interventions

Self-efficacy was found to have a significant impact on both leadership learning and job performance. To maximize the effectiveness of leadership coaching, it is recommended that organizations:

- Implement **pre-coaching interventions** aimed at **building coachee self-efficacy**, such as **motivational interviews**, **confidence-building activities**, and **personalized goal-setting exercises**.
- Provide coachees with opportunities to **reflect on past successes** and **set realistic, incremental goals** that can foster a sense of accomplishment and empowerment, enhancing their overall confidence.

9.4 Promoting Adaptive Flexibility in Coaching

The results suggest that coaching interventions should be flexible and adaptable to the diverse needs of participants. Public sector HRM programs should consider:

- **Designing coaching programs that allow flexibility** in delivery, such as **hybrid coaching models** combining individual and group coaching, or allowing for more **informal, adaptive coaching sessions** when necessary.
- Offering coaches the ability to **adapt their approaches** based on coachee feedback and progress, ensuring that participants are not overwhelmed by rigid frameworks or timelines, which may negatively impact their performance and engagement.

9.5 Measuring Coaching Effectiveness Beyond Project Outputs

While the focus of leadership coaching programs in the public sector is often on **project-based outcomes**, this study suggests that performance improvement should also be evaluated through **holistic measures**. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- **Comprehensive evaluation frameworks** be developed to assess **both process and outcome-oriented aspects of coaching**, including **coaching satisfaction**, **leadership growth**, and **long-term impact** on organizational performance.
- Involve **stakeholders** (such as superiors and subordinates of coachees) in the evaluation process to provide a broader perspective on coaching effectiveness, including its impact on team dynamics and organizational culture.

9.6 Future Research Directions

Finally, the study calls for further investigation into the long-term effects of leadership coaching and its influence on broader organizational outcomes. Future research should consider:

- **Longitudinal studies** to assess the sustainability of coaching impacts on job performance and leadership development over time.
- **Comparative studies** across different sectors (public vs. private) to explore how coaching impacts may differ based on organizational culture and leadership challenges.
- Exploring the role of **contextual factors**, such as **organizational culture**, **team dynamics**, and **coaching delivery modes**, in moderating the effectiveness of leadership coaching interventions.

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