INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Cynthia Ifeoma, Ogburie

THE FINAL MASTER'S THESIS

Mentorystės ir Koučingo Vaidmuo Ugdant Būsimus Projektų Vadovus	THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP AND COACHING IN DEVELOPING FUTURE PROJECT LEADERS

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SUMMARY

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL
INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT STYUDY PROGRAMME
CYNTHIA IFEOMA, OGBURIE

THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP AND COACHING IN DEVELOPING FUTURE PROJECT LEADERS

This Final Master's Thesis Projects (FMTP) examined the role of mentorship and coaching in developing future project leaders within a project management context. The study aimed to explore how these developmental practices influence leadership competencies, the mechanisms through which the contribute to lead to growth. And the challenges encountered by project leaders during their development. A mixed method research design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative approach to provide comprehensive insights.

Primary data were collected from 33 participants across eight countries in Africa, Europe, Asia and North America, offering diverse and cross-cultural perspectives. The quantitative phase involved structured questionnaires administered to 28 participants and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The results revealed that mentorship and coaching exert a positive and statistically significant influence on leadership competences ($F = 63.814$. Sig = 0.000). Key competencies enhanced include or included communication and influential skills, decision making under uncertainty, team motivation and engagement, and project planning and controls.

The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with five project leaders analyzed through thematic analysis. Findings supported the quantitative analysis and provided deeper insights. Highlighting a shift from task-oriented leadership to a more people and team-centered approach. Participants reported improvements in reflective thinking, confidence, problem solving abilities, and practical judgment.

Overall, the FMTP concluded that mentorship and coaching are effective mechanisms for developing competent, resilient, and team-centered project leaders capable of managing uncertainty and complex organizational challenges. The results offer valuable in implications

for organizations seeking to implement or enhance leadership development programs and may be adapted by adapted for publication in academic or professional outlets.

SANTRAUKA

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO VERSLO MOKYKLA

TARPTAUTINĖ PROJEKTŲ VALDYMO STUDIJOS PROGRAMA

CYNTHIA IFEOMA, OGBURIE

MENTORYSTĖS IR KOUČINGO VAIDMUO UGDANT BŪSIMUS PROJEKTŲ VADOVUS

Vadovas - Doc. Dr. Janis Paksis

Magistro darbas parengtas Vilniuje, 2025 m.

Magistro darbo apimtis: 81 puslapiai

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Literatūros šaltinių skaičius: 35 vnt.

Šiame baigiamajame magistro darbo projekte (BMA) buvo nagrinėjamas mentorystės ir koučingo vaidmuo ugdant būsimus projektų vadovus projektų valdymo kontekste. Tyrimo tikslas buvo ištirti, kaip šios ugdymo praktikos veikia vadovavimo kompetencijas, mechanizmus, kuriais jos prisideda prie augimo. Ir iššūkius, su kuriais susiduria projektų vadovai tobulėjimo metu. Buvo naudojamas mišraus metodo tyrimo dizainas, integruojantis kiekybinį ir kokybinį požiūrį, siekiant pateikti išsamias įžvalgas.

Pirminiai duomenys buvo surinkti iš 33 dalyvių aštuoniose Afrikos, Europos, Azijos ir Šiaurės Amerikos šalyse, pateikiant įvairias ir tarpkultūrines perspektyvas. Kiekybiniame etape 28 dalyviams buvo pateiktos struktūrizuotos anketos, kurios buvo analizuojamos naudojant aprašomąją statistiką ir daugybinę regresinę analizę. Rezultatai parodė, kad mentorystė ir koučingas daro teigiamą ir statistiškai reikšmingą įtaką vadovavimo kompetencijoms ($F = 63{,}814$. $Sig = 0{,}000$). Pagrindinės sustiprintos kompetencijos apima bendravimo ir įtakos įgūdžius, sprendimų priėmimą neapibrėžtumo sąlygomis, komandos motyvaciją ir įsitraukimą bei projektų planavimą ir kontrolę.

Kokybiniame etape buvo atlikti pusiau struktūrizuoti interviu su penkiais projektų vadovais, analizuojami taikant teminę analizę. Gauti rezultatai patvirtino kiekybinę analizę ir suteikė gilesnių įžvalgų. Pabrėžiamas perėjimas nuo į užduotis orientuoto vadovavimo prie labiau į žmones ir komandą orientuoto požiūrio. Dalyviai pranešė apie pagerėjusį reflektyvų mąstymą, pasitikėjimą savimi, problemų sprendimo gebėjimus ir praktinį sprendimų priėmimą.

Apskritai FMTP padarė išvadą, kad mentorystė ir koučingas yra veiksmingi mechanizmai ugdant kompetentingus, atsparius ir į komandą orientuotus projektų vadovus, gebančius valdyti neapibrėžtumą ir sudėtingus organizacinius iššūkius. Rezultatai yra vertingos informacijos organizacijoms, siekiančioms įgyvendinti arba tobulinti vadovavimo ugdymo programas, ir gali būti pritaikyti publikavimui akademinėse ar profesinėse leidiniuose.

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INTRODUCTION

In various disciplines, mentorship and coaching have long been recognized as valuable practices for supporting personal and professional development. They are applied across education, healthcare, business, personal development, and parenting, and are associated with improved performance, enhanced confidence, and stronger career trajectories (Eby et al., 2015; Bozer & Jones, 2018; LinkedIn, 2025).

Within organizations, mentorship and coaching often complement formal training by providing experiences based on personalized learning in specific contexts (Project Management Institute, 2024; Research.com, 2023). Over time, workplaces have evolved due to globalization, technological advances, and shifts in workforce demographics. Organizations now seek more adaptable and capable leadership (Bozer & Jones, 2018).

Mentorship and coaching have thus become central to leadership development strategies. While both aim to accelerate professional growth, they differ in orientation and outcomes. Mentorship involves a long-term developmental relationship in which a more experienced professional offers guidance, knowledge transfer, and psychosocial support to a less experienced colleague (Eby et al., 2015; Clutterbuck et al., 2016; NGO Coaching & Mentoring Network, 2020). Coaching, in contrast, is structured and short-term, designed to facilitate specific developmental goals, performance improvement, or behavioral changes through reflective dialogue and targeted interventions (Grover & Furnham, 2016; Bozer & Jones, 2018; PMC, 2021). Together, they represent a complementary approach to building leadership capability.

In project management, leaders are expected to mobilize temporary teams, coordinate across diverse stakeholders, and deliver outcomes in environments shaped by complexity, innovation, and uncertainty (Muller et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2019; Project Management Symposium, 2024). Unlike traditional managers, project leaders often lack permanent authority and rely on influence, negotiation, and adaptability to succeed, making leadership development in this context particularly challenging.

The methodological orientation of this study is a longitudinal design, collecting data from the same subjects over an extended period. This design captures developmental processes, patterns of change, and long-term impacts (Caruana et al., 2015; PMC, 2021). A qualitative longitudinal approach will be employed to provide in-depth understanding of project leadership development.

Problem Statement

Despite the recognized benefits of mentorship and coaching, research on their long-term impact on project leadership remains limited. Most studies focus on short-term outcomes or leadership in stable organizational contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how these practices influence project managers over time (Larsson et al., 2016; Caruana et al., 2015).

The unique demands of project leadership temporary teams, uncertainty, and dynamic stakeholder environments mean traditional leadership development models may not fully apply (Ika et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2019).

Practical challenges also arise when conducting longitudinal qualitative research. Many workplaces operate remotely or in hybrid modes, limiting in-person observation. This study therefore incorporates one-on-one interviews and structured follow-ups to capture rich, reliable data (PMC, 2021; LinkedIn, 2025).

Research Aim & Objectives

Aim: To explore the long-term impact of mentorship and coaching on the development of project leaders.

Objectives:

  I.   Examine how mentorship and coaching influences the leadership competencies of project managers.
  II. Identify the mechanisms through which these developmental practices affect leadership growth.
  III. Evaluate whether leadership inprovements gained from mentorship and coaching are maintained and applied over time.

 Research Questions

  I.   How do mentorship and coaching contribute to the development of project leadership competencies?
  II. What are the perceived long-term effects of mentorship and coaching on project leaders?
  III. What challenges does project leaders encounter during mentorship and coaching that may affect their leadership improvements?

Significance of the Study

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining long-term outcomes of mentorship and coaching for project leadership development. The findings will provide organizations with actionable insights for designing effective leadership development programs, particularly in remote or hybrid work environments. Additionally, it contributes to the theoretical understanding of how leadership behaviors, skills, and identity evolve over time in project-based settings (Forbes, 2025; Project Management Institute, 2024).

Scope & Limitations

The study focuses on project leaders who have participated in mentorship and coaching programs within the past five years. Data collection will be qualitative, including interviews and follow-up observations, providing in-depth insight into leadership development trajectories.

Limitations:

- Remote and hybrid working conditions may restrict in-person interactions.
- Participant availability and organizational constraints may affect longitudinal consistency.
- Findings may be context-specific to the organizations studied and not generalizable to all industries.

1. LITERATURE ANALYSES

1.1 Background & Concept

The purpose of this literature review is to critically examine existing scholarship and practice surrounding mentorship, coaching, and project leadership development, while situating the study within broader debates on sustainability and long-term impact. The review draws from both academic and practitioner sources published between 2015 and 2025, reflecting the dual emphasis of this research on theoretical grounding and workplace applicability.

The chapter is organized thematically to address four interconnected areas:

- The theoretical underpinnings of project leadership as distinct from general leadership.
- The role of mentorship and coaching in leadership development, with particular emphasis on their relevance to project management.
- The integration of sustainability dimensions in project management, guided by Martens and Carvalho's (2014) conceptual framework.
- Methodological insights on longitudinal qualitative research, which frame the design of this study.

By synthesizing findings across these areas, the review aims to identify both the contributions and limitations of existing literature. In particular, it highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the long-term impacts of mentorship and coaching in preparing future project leaders, especially under conditions of uncertainty, digital transformation, and hybrid modes of work.

1.2 Mentorship and Coaching

1.2.1 Defining Mentorship

Mentorship is broadly recognized as a developmental relationship in which a more experienced individual, the mentor, provides guidance, support, and advice to a less experienced person, the mentee, with the goal foster personal and professional growth (Clutterbuck, 2014; Ghosh et al., 2019). This relationship often extends beyond immediate task-based objectives and encompasses long-term career development, role modeling, and psychosocial support, including confidence building and identity formation (Kram, 1985; Leaders.com, 2023).

Mentorship is not confined to hierarchical reporting lines; rather, it relies on mutual trust, respect, and commitment to learning. In organizational contexts, mentorship has been linked to improved job satisfaction, retention, and leadership readiness, suggesting that it serves both individual and organizational objectives (CareerFit, 2023; Forbes, 2025). Within project management, mentorship is particularly relevant because it enables aspiring project leaders to access tacit knowledge, understand organizational culture, and navigate complex stakeholder relationships, which may not be fully captured through formal training or classroom instruction (APM, 2021; Brightwork, 2022).

Effective mentorship typically combines career oriented guidance such as providing advice on career paths, skill development, and project opportunities with psychosocial support, including encouragement, confidence building, and role modeling (Kram, 1985; Together Platform, 2023). By providing a safe space for reflection and discussion, mentorship supports the development of both technical and relational competencies essential for project leadership.

In sum, mentorship is a relational, long-term, and holistic developmental practice that contributes not only to individual growth but also to building sustainable leadership pipelines within organizations. It lays the foundation for nurturing future project leaders by combining experiential knowledge transfer with emotional and career support.

1.2.2 Defining Coaching

Coaching is a structured, goal-oriented developmental practice that focuses on enhancing an individual's performance, skills, and competencies through guided reflection, feedback, and facilitated learning (ICF, 2019; BetterUp, 2022). Unlike mentorship, which often emphasizes long-term career guidance and psychosocial support, coaching is typically shorter term and task or specific skill, aiming to improve immediate effectiveness in professional roles (Careerminds, 2021; Together Platform, 2023).

Coaching can be delivered by internal managers, trained organizational coaches, or external professionals, and is characterized by a partnership model in which the coachee actively engages in self-directed learning. This collaborative approach encourages accountability, self awareness, and practical problem solving, often using techniques such as reflective questioning, scenario analysis, and action planning (Grant, 2017; Coaching Focus, 2023).

In the context of project management, coaching equips leaders to handle the dynamic and high-pressure environments typical of projects. By focusing on specific competencies such as decision making, stakeholder communication, conflict resolution, and team motivation coaching enhances a project leader's ability to respond adaptively to challenges, navigate uncertainty, and achieve project objectives efficiently (ProjectManager.com, 2023; Meah-Ali, 2024).

Overall, coaching is a structured, short-term, and performance-driven approach to professional development that complements mentorship. While mentorship provides long-term guidance and relational support, coaching targets specific skills and immediate outcomes, enabling leaders to address current challenges while preparing for future responsibilities.

1.2.3 Distinctions Between Mentorship and Coaching

Although mentorship and coaching are often mentioned together in leadership development discussions, they differ in purpose, duration, structure, and relational dynamics. Understanding these distinctions is critical for designing effective developmental programs, particularly in project management contexts where leaders must balance immediate performance demands with long-term growth (Garvey et al., 2017; Together Platform, 2023).

Purpose and Focus: Mentorship primarily aims at long-term professional and personal development, providing guidance on career trajectories, organizational culture, and identity formation. Coaching, on the other hand, targets specific competencies, behaviors, or performance goals, often addressing immediate challenges in the workplace (BetterUp, 2022; Careerminds, 2021).

Duration and Structure: Mentorship relationships are typically informal, ongoing, and flexible, with interactions guided by mutual availability and evolving needs. Coaching engagements are more structured, often time-bound, and goal driven, with predefined objectives and measurable outcomes (Grant, 2017; Coaching Focus, 2023).

Relational Dynamics: Mentorship tends to rely on hierarchical or experience-based dynamics, where the mentor's wisdom and guidance shape the mentee's development (Kram, 1985). Coaching emphasizes a partnership model, where the coach facilitates the coachee's self-directed learning and reflection, often with minimal directive input (ICF, 2019).

Complementarity: Despite these differences, mentorship and coaching are complementary. Mentorship provides a broad developmental context, building resilience, confidence, and long-term strategic insight. Coaching addresses immediate skill gaps and performance challenges, ensuring that leaders can apply their knowledge effectively in real-time project settings (Ghosh et al., 2019; Forbes, 2025). When used together, organizations can create a robust leadership development ecosystem that supports both short-term performance and long-term growth.

In project management, integrating mentorship and coaching is particularly valuable. Project leaders face transient teams, tight deadlines, and complex stakeholder environments, requiring both adaptive skills and deep contextual understanding. Mentorship nurtures the strategic and relational capacities of leaders, while coaching hones practical abilities and decision-making skills, ensuring sustainable leadership development across multiple project cycles (APM, 2021; Brightwork, 2022).

1.3 Project Leadership

1.3.1 Defining Project Leaders

Project leaders, often referred to as project managers, are professionals responsible for planning, executing, and closing projects while ensuring that objectives are met within defined constraints of time, scope, and resources (Turner, 2016; Research.com, 2025). Unlike traditional line managers, project leaders typically operate within temporary, cross-functional teams, requiring them to influence and motivate team members without relying solely on hierarchical authority (Müller & Turner, 2017; ProjectManager.com, 2023).

International frameworks, such as the IPMA Individual Competence Baseline (ICB), provide a structured understanding of the competence areas required for effective project leadership. IPMA groups these competencies into three domains:

a. Perspective Competencies

These competencies refer to a leader's ability to understand the broader context of the project organizational strategy, governance, culture, sustainability, compliance, and external influences. Project leaders must align project objectives with organizational goals, navigate political environments, and consider long term strategic impacts beyond the immediate project scope(IPMA,2020). This domain reinforces the strategic responsibilities outlined earlier, such as project planning, alignment with organizational priorities, and stakeholder management.

b. People Competencies

This domain encompasses interpersonal and behavioural capabilities essential for leading temporary teams. It includes communication, conflict resolution, self-reflection, motivation, teamwork, leadership style and emotional intelligence. These competencies closely mirror the interpersonal dimensions already identified in project leadership, such as inspiring collaboration, building trust, and managing stakeholder expectations. However, IPMA highlights their deeper behavioral foundations, including self-awareness, personal integrity, and the ability to foster a psychologically safe team environment.

c. Practice Competencies

Practice competencies cover the technical and methodological skills required for delivering project results planning, scheduling, budgeting, risk management, quality control, procurement, and change managemant.

These align with the technical competencies already referenced (like, risk assessment, budgeting), but IPMA adds emphasis on structured processes, methods, and tools necessary to manage the project lifecycle effectively.

Mentorship and Coaching Within the IPMA Competence Framework

Given the complexity and cross domain nature of project leadership, mentorship and coaching are critical developmental mechanisms.

- Mentorship supports growth in perspective and people competencies by helping leaders understand organizational politics, apply lessons learned, develop self awareness, and build broader strategic thinking.
- Coaching, by contrast, strengthens practice and people competencies by refining decisions, communication, conflict resolution, meeting facilitation, and stakeholder engagement skills.

In this way, mentorship and coaching complement formal training by supporting the holistic development of project leaders across all IPMA competence domains.

Project leaders occupy a distinct role within organizations, combining technical expertise with relational and adaptive skills. Their success depends not only on experience but also on structured developmental support through mentorship and coaching, underscoring the importance of longitudinal studies that track leadership growth over time.

Understanding these competence domains also highlights why project leadership differs fundamentally from general organizational leadership, as explored in section 1.3.2.

1.3.2 Project Leadership vs. General Leadership

Project leadership differs from general organizational leadership in several key ways. First, project leaders often manage temporary, cross-functional teams without formal hierarchical authority, requiring them to rely on influence, negotiation, and relational skills (Turner, 2016; Research.com, 2025). Second, projects operate within time-bound constraints, necessitating rapid decision-making and the ability to prioritize competing demands effectively. Moreover, project leadership is characterized by uncertainty and complexity, as each project is unique, with varying objectives, stakeholders, and environmental factors. Unlike general leadership roles, which may focus on sustained organizational performance, project leaders must deliver outcomes within finite timeframes while balancing quality, cost, and scope constraints (Müller & Turner, 2017; PMI, 2021). These distinctions underscore the need for specialized developmental practices. Mentorship provides project leaders with insights into organizational culture, lessons learned from previous projects, and guidance on strategic decision-making. Coaching, in turn, targets immediate competencies such as stakeholder communication, conflict resolution, and adaptive problem-solving, enabling leaders to navigate project-specific challenges effectively.

1.3.3 Challenges in Project Leadership

Project leadership faces unique challenges that set it apart from general management. Temporary team structures often result in limited cohesion, requiring leaders to quickly establish trust and clarity of roles (Clarke, 2012). High levels of uncertainty in scope, resources, and stakeholder demands demand adaptability and resilience (Yang et al., 2018).

Furthermore, project leaders must manage knowledge transfer and ensure continuity across project cycles, particularly in organizations with high turnover or dispersed teams. The rise of remote and hybrid work models introduces additional challenges, as opportunities for informal mentoring, observation, and relationship building are reduced (Lobe et al., 2020; Meah-Ali, 2024).

Addressing these challenges requires targeted development strategies. By combining mentorship and coaching within structured programs, organizations can help project leaders build the relational, technical, and adaptive competencies needed to navigate these complex environments, ensuring sustained effectiveness and leadership readiness over time.

1.4 Mentorship and Coaching in Leadership Development

1.4.1 Role of Mentorship in Leadership Growth

Mentorship plays a pivotal role in cultivating leadership skills by providing emerging leaders with guidance, experiential knowledge, and psychosocial support (Kram, 1985; CareerFit, 2023). Within project management, mentorship enables aspiring leaders to navigate complex team dynamics, stakeholder relationships, and organizational culture — areas often insufficiently addressed in formal training programs (APM, 2021; Brightwork, 2022).

Through mentorship, project leaders gain access to tacit knowledge accumulated by experienced practitioners, learn to anticipate challenges, and develop strategic thinking capabilities. Mentorship also facilitates reflective learning, as mentees discuss experiences, analyze decisions, and internalize lessons from successes and setbacks (Leaders.com, 2023).

Empirical studies highlight the positive impact of mentorship on leadership growth. For instance, mentees demonstrate higher confidence in decision-making, stronger relational skills, and increased readiness for higher responsibility roles (Forbes, 2025; Ghosh et al., 2019). Beyond individual benefits, mentorship contributes to organizational sustainability by creating a pipeline of capable leaders prepared to handle successive projects, ensuring continuity and resilience.

In summary, mentorship provides a long-term, relational, and holistic framework for leadership development, particularly suited to the dynamic and temporary nature of project teams. It strengthens both individual competencies and the organization's overall leadership capacity.

1.4.2 Coaching as a Leadership Development Tool

Coaching complements mentorship by focusing on short-term, performance-driven development (BetterUp, 2022; Careerminds, 2021). It is structured, goal-oriented, and typically addresses specific competencies required for immediate effectiveness, such as conflict resolution, stakeholder communication, and adaptive problem-solving (ProjectManager.com, 2023; Meah-Ali, 2024).

In project leadership, coaching equips leaders to respond effectively to the uncertain and high-pressure environment of projects. By facilitating reflection, feedback, and skill application in real time, coaching helps leaders adapt to dynamic team structures, tight deadlines, and complex stakeholder requirements (Coaching Focus, 2023).

Moreover, coaching fosters self-directed learning, empowering leaders to identify gaps, set actionable goals, and implement solutions autonomously. This targeted development enhances both individual performance and the effectiveness of project teams, complementing the broader, relational benefits provided by mentorship.

1.4.3 Combined Effects of Coaching and Mentorship

When integrated, mentorship and coaching create a comprehensive developmental ecosystem for project leaders (Ghosh et al., 2019; Forbes, 2025). Mentorship provides long-term guidance, psychosocial support, and career insights, while coaching hones specific skills and addresses immediate performance challenges.

This combination ensures that emerging project leaders develop both strategic and operational competencies, enabling them to manage present projects effectively while preparing for future leadership responsibilities (APM, 2021; Brightwork, 2022). Organizations that invest in both approaches benefit from improved retention, enhanced leadership pipelines, and sustained project performance, aligning leadership development with sustainability principles (Martens & Carvalho, 2014).

1.5 Sustainability in Project Leadership Development

Building on Martens & Martens (2014), sustainability in project management extends beyond environmental or economic concerns to include human sustainability, i.e., the development of enduring leadership capacity within organizations. Mentorship and coaching play a central role in achieving this goal by fostering long-term effectiveness, impact on stakeholders, and preparedness for future challenges.

Mentorship ensures that knowledge, skills, and organizational values are transferred across generations of leaders, creating a resilient leadership pipeline (Martens & Martens, 2014; Forbes, 2025). Coaching reinforces these capabilities by targeting current performance needs and enhancing adaptive competencies, ensuring leaders are equipped to navigate uncertainty and drive sustainable project outcomes.

Sustainable leadership development also emphasizes inclusivity, continuous learning, and adaptability, aligning with organizational goals and broader societal responsibilities. By integrating mentorship, coaching, and sustainability principles, organizations can cultivate project leaders who not only excel in individual projects but also contribute to long-term organizational resilience and success (Brightwork, 2022; Meah-Ali, 2024).

1.5.1 Competencies and Skills Required of Project Leaders

Project leaders require a combination of technical, interpersonal, and adaptive competencies to successfully manage projects in dynamic and complex environments (Yang et al., 2018; Meah-Ali, 2024).

Technical competencies include planning, scheduling, budgeting, risk assessment, and quality management. These skills ensure that project deliverables are completed on time, within scope, and within budget (PMI, 2021; ProjectManager.com, 2023). Technical expertise is foundational but insufficient on its own, given the collaborative and uncertain nature of most projects.

Interpersonal competencies encompass communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, and stakeholder management. Project leaders must motivate diverse teams, build trust rapidly, and manage relationships across organizational boundaries (Clarke, 2012; Turner, 2016). Effective interpersonal skills facilitate collaboration and ensure that team members are aligned with project objectives.

Adaptive competencies involve flexibility, critical thinking, problem-solving, and resilience. Project leaders encounter unforeseen challenges, shifting priorities, and high levels of uncertainty. The ability to adapt to evolving circumstances while maintaining team cohesion and performance is a distinguishing feature of effective project leadership (Müller & Turner, 2017; Research.com, 2025).

Mentorship and coaching are instrumental in developing these competencies. Mentorship provides long-term guidance, exposure to tacit knowledge, and insights from experienced leaders, while coaching focuses on enhancing specific technical or behavioral skills in real time (APM, 2021; Brightwork, 2022). Together, they support holistic leadership development that addresses the multifaceted requirements of project management.

1.5.2 Organizational Practices Supporting Leadership Development

Organizations employ a variety of practices to cultivate project leadership capabilities, including formal training, mentorship programs, coaching, and shadowing initiatives (Forbes, 2025; CareerFit, 2023). Structured mentorship programs connect emerging leaders with experienced mentors who provide guidance on strategic thinking, organizational culture, and career progression. Coaching programs focus on skill gaps, performance improvement, and adaptive learning in specific project contexts (BetterUp, 2022; Coaching Focus, 2023).

Shadowing and rotational programs allow project leaders to gain hands-on experience in diverse project environments, further enhancing their exposure to different leadership styles and challenges (Meah-Ali, 2024; PMI, 2021). These organizational practices collectively contribute to building a robust leadership pipeline, ensuring that future project leaders are equipped to meet both immediate and long-term organizational needs.

1.6 Longitudinal Qualitative Research in Project Leadership

1.6.1 Rationale for Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal research provides a powerful framework for understanding how project leaders develop over time, capturing both the incremental and cumulative effects of mentorship and coaching (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Saldaña, 2014). Unlike cross-sectional studies, which offer a single snapshot of competencies or behaviors, longitudinal studies allow researchers to track evolving skills, adaptive strategies, and leadership growth across multiple project cycles (Day & Dragoni, 2015; Neale, 2021).

In the context of project management, longitudinal approaches are particularly valuable because leadership development is rarely instantaneous. Emerging leaders gradually acquire technical expertise, relational skills, and adaptive competencies. Mentorship provides long-term guidance and exposure to tacit knowledge, while coaching enhances immediate skill application. Only by observing these processes over time can researchers discern patterns, milestones, and factors influencing sustained growth (APM, 2021; Brightwork, 2022).

Longitudinal studies also facilitate the evaluation of organizational interventions, such as structured mentorship and coaching programs, providing evidence of their effectiveness and informing strategies for refining leadership development initiatives (Ghosh et al., 2019; Forbes, 2025).

1.6.2 Qualitative Orientation

The qualitative orientation of this study emphasizes depth over breadth, privileging rich descriptions and participants' lived experiences over generalizability. By using interviews, reflective narratives, and observational data, qualitative longitudinal research provides a nuanced understanding of how mentorship and coaching influence project leaders' journeys (Neale, 2021). This focus aligns with the relational and process-oriented character of both project leadership and developmental practices, allowing for the capture of meaning-making processes that quantitative measures alone may miss.

1.6.3 Practical Challenges

Despite its advantages, longitudinal qualitative research presents notable challenges. Maintaining participant engagement over time can be difficult, especially in professional contexts characterized by high turnover and workload pressures (Calman et al., 2013). The increasing prevalence of remote and hybrid work arrangements further complicates direct access to participants, reducing opportunities for in-person observation and informal interaction. As a result, adaptive strategies such as virtual interviews, digital diaries, and periodic reflective surveys must be incorporated to sustain data collection and ensure robustness (Lobe et al., 2020). These strategies, while effective, require careful planning to maintain depth and authenticity of engagement.

1.6.4 Relevance to the Present Study

For the purposes of this thesis, a longitudinal qualitative design offers a suitable methodological foundation to explore the long-term impact of mentorship and coaching on developing project leaders. It allows the study to move beyond immediate training outcomes and instead examine how sustained developmental relationships shape leaders' competencies, decision-making abilities, and readiness to handle future challenges. In doing so, it addresses a critical gap in the literature: the lack of empirical research on the longitudinal effects of mentorship and coaching within project management contexts.

1.7 Integration and Identified Gaps

The review of literature has highlighted the critical role that mentorship and coaching play in supporting professional growth, fostering leadership competencies, and preparing organizations for future challenges. Within project management, these practices are increasingly positioned as tools to develop leaders capable of navigating complexity,

uncertainty, and innovation. Frameworks of mentorship emphasize relational guidance and career development, while coaching focuses on performance enhancement and reflective practice (Garvey et al., 2017; Iordanou et al., 2017). Collectively, they have been linked to improved decision-making, team engagement, and adaptive leadership behaviors across organizational contexts (Grant, 2017; De Haan, 2021).

However, the review also reveals that project leadership differs fundamentally from general leadership, requiring the ability to lead temporary teams, manage dynamic stakeholder environments, and deliver within strict constraints of time, scope, and resources (Turner, 2018; Müller & Klein, 2020). Although literature on general leadership development is extensive, the application of mentorship and coaching to project-specific contexts remains underexplored. Studies often treat leadership development in broad organizational terms, neglecting the unique pressures of project environments.

Furthermore, while mentorship and coaching are well-documented in both corporate and academic literature, the long-term impacts of these practices on project leadership remain largely untested. Most studies adopt cross-sectional designs, measuring outcomes at a single point in time (Day & Dragoni, 2015; Jones et al., 2016). This approach limits understanding of how competencies evolve and whether developmental gains are sustained. The scarcity of longitudinal qualitative research in project management is therefore a notable gap, particularly in light of calls for more process-oriented perspectives on leadership development (Neale, 2021).

Another significant gap lies in the changing context of work. With the rise of remote and hybrid models, opportunities for informal mentoring, shadowing, and coaching have been reduced, complicating the establishment and maintenance of developmental relationships (Lobe et al., 2020). Few studies address how these new realities affect mentorship and coaching effectiveness, particularly in project-based work where collaboration and visibility are critical.

Finally, there is a lack of integration between sustainability-oriented frameworks in project management (Martens & Martens, 2014) and the developmental practices of mentorship and coaching. While sustainability in projects often focuses on environmental, economic, and social dimensions, litle attention has been given to the human sustainability of leadership pipelines that is, how organizations ensure a steady development of capable project leaders over time.

By addressing these gaps, this study contributes both theoretical and practical insights, offering a longitudinal qualitative perspective on how mentorship and coaching shape the competencies of future project leaders in evolving organizational landscapes.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the methodology adopted were described in details. It outlines the research methods, research designed adopted, research population, sampling strategy, instrument utilized, adherence to ethical principle and techniques used data analysis

2.1 Research Method

In this research, mixed approached was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods in investigating the role of mentorship and coaching in the development of future project leaders to ensure detailed analysis of the topic of discussion and the specifics objectives. Combination of both approach not only provide comprehensive understanding of the topic of discussion, but it enhance the validation of the result. This is because relying only on simple methodological approach might result to varying level of contribution of coaching and mentorship, requiring further explanation. Thus employing mixed methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative) addresses questions or objectives not clearly and well addressed by only single approach. Additionally, While the quantitative approach offers the measurable prove on the extent to which coaching and mentorship improve leadership development, qualitative approach enable provision of well detailed information and insights from the participants through their experiences, narrative and perceptions on how leadership development has been shaped by mentorship and coaching

2.2 Research Design

In this research, explanatory sequential mixed-method research design was employed in examining how leadership development is influence by coaching and mentorship programs. This research design involved two (2) different stages of data gathering and data analysis, making it more suitable for this study. The first stage begin with extraction of quantitative data from the participants, followed by the second stage which is the collection of qualitative data from the participants. This research design was considered suitable owing to the fact that it allows the study to first establish empirical patterns and fact then followed by deeper explanations for those discoveries.

2.3 Research Population

The population of the research comprises of inspiring and emerging project leaders from different countries across four continents (Asia, Africa, Europe and America), covering not only early career project manager but project team members with leadership role and professionally going through leadership development program.

2.4 Sampling Strategy

The research sampled 33 participants from different countries (Nigeria, United State of America, Canada, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, Pakistan and Lithuania). Inclusion of participants form these countries not only enable collection of diverse information from the participants but strengthening the cross culture importance and generalization of the findings as well as comparative perspectives on coaching and mentorship. Out of the thirty three (33) participants, qualitative component (interview) was used to collected data from five (5) of them whereas questionnaire (quantitative component) was utilized to collected required information from twenty eight (28) participants of them. Purposive sampling strategy was employed to recruit the participants of the study. Only those who have been exposed to coaching and mentorship and involved in project related role were recruited into this research, so as to provide rich, relevance and real world information on how mentorship and coaching shape leadership development within project management setting.

2.5 Research instruments

The study employed both interview and survey, supporting the study's adoption of mixed approaches. Survey also known as questionnaire was constructed by the research to gather quantitative information from the participants, relevance to the study objectives. Semi-interview guide was also constructed by the researcher, enabling collection of participants' perspectives, opinions and experience on how coaching and mentorship influence leadership development. To ensure reliability of the instruments both the survey and interview guide were reviewed and scrutinized by the research supervisor, ensuring that the instruments were not hindered by unclear and ambiguous languages and captured what they intent to address. However, both the interview and survey were conducted electronically. While the interview were conducted using teams platform, Google form was used to share the survey across to the participants.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

In this study, the ethical protocols and principle were strictly adhered to, some of which are explained below:

Informed consent: Prior to involvement of the participants in this study, they were properly informed about the aim and objective of the study as well as the advantage and potential risks while voluntary consent was also obtained.

Anonymity and confidentiality: The identity of the participants were adequately protected. It was not included in the survey the identifying personal variables like names and mobile phone number of the participants. Also, data collected through interview were proper coded after

transcription and none of the identifiable information were presented either in the analysis, report or publication.

Voluntary Participation: The involvement of the participants in this research is entirely voluntary. Neither were the participant forced nor compensates to participate in this research. Their right and freedom to withdraw from the research at any point in time without any explanation or consequence was communicated and observed.

2.7 Method of data analysis

Mixed approach was also employed for data analysis, aligning with the research design and research objectives. Quantitative analytical techniques covers both descriptive statistics (parentage and histogram) and inferential statistics (multiple regression). While the descriptive statistics (parentage and histogram) was used to summarise and explore the characteristics of the participants, multiple regression was used to determine the direction of the relationship mentorship and coaching has with future leadership development within project management setting.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results obtained from analysis on role of mentorship and coaching in future project leaders development are presented and discussed. While the data obtained through questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis, data collected through interview were analyzed using thematic analysis. However, the findings are interpreted in relation to research objectives and relevant leadership literature and theories with emphasis on their practical and theoretical implication.

3.1 Quantities analysis Section

Role of coaching and mentorship in leadership development

Analysis of Demography Information of the participant obtained from questionnaire

Table 3.1

Analysis of Demography Information of the participant obtained from questionnaire

Country		Frequency	Percentage
	Canada	1	3.6
	Italy	1	3.6
	Lithuania	19	67.9
	Germany	1	3.6
	Nigeria	3	10.7
	Pakistan	1	3.6
	United Kingdom	1	3.6
	United States of America	1	3.6
	Total	28	100.0
Industry		Frequency	Percentage
	Auditing authority	1	3.6
	Construction	1	3.6
	Consultation	1	3.6

	Frequency	Percentage
Finance and Banking	6	21.4
Global Business Services	1	3.6
Healthcare	8	28.6
IT	8	28.6
Logistics	1	3.6
TV and event production	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0
Experience	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
2–5 years	13	46.4
6–10 years	2	7.1
Valid Less than 2 years	7	25.0
More than 10 years	6	21.4
Total	28	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The result of descriptive statistics revealed that sample participants for survey were from multiple countries (Nigeria, United State of America, Canada, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, Pakistan and Lithuania), with majority of the participant being Lithuania (67.9%) accounting for largest proportion of the respondents. This geographic spread indicated that the research capture diverse international perspectives on the role of coaching and mentorship in building future leaders.

Among all the sector under consideration, the distribution of the participants by industry reveals that sector such as health and IT recorded highest percentage of 28.6% and 28.6% respectively followed by and finance and banking with 21.4%, suggesting that respondents were majorly drawn from industry where leadership development program, structured project work, and formal coaching and mentorship practices are commonly institutionalized.

As regarding the distribution of respondents by years of project management experience, the results revealed that participants with 2-5 year of experience in project management has the highest percentage (46.4%), followed by participants with more than 10 years with 21.4%, This patter is an indication that the research capture perspective from early career project experts, who are formative phase of leadership development and well

experienced project expert with intensive exposure to project leadership roles. However, the large number of the participants of the study with 2to 5 years of experience is particularly relevant to this research, as employee at this stage are always transition to leadership positions and have the likelihood of actively engaging in mentorship and coaching relationship to build future project leaders.

Having analyzed and presented the bio data of the participant, the analysis now shift to substantive variables of the research.

Table 3.2

Participation in formal mentorship or coaching program related to project management

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, as both Trainer and Trainee	15	53.6
Yes, As Trainee	13	46.4
Total	28	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3.1 showed that most of the participants of the study (53.6%) had involved in formal coaching and mentorship program related to project management as both trainer and trainee while 46.4% of the participant had participated as trainee, suggesting that participants have not only received guidance and supports in project management practices from their leaders but have also coached, mentored and helped other develop in project management, demonstrating active participation in knowledge sharing and leadership developments. Having majority of the sampled participants with both experiences strengthens the research, as they were able to reflect on coaching and mentorship program from the perspective of trainee and trainer.

Effectiveness of mentorship/coaching Program in future project leader development

Table 3.3

Effectiveness of mentorship/coaching Program in future project leader development

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
1	2	7.1
2	0	0
3	0	0

4	1	3.6
5	1	3.6
6	1	3.6
7	4	14.3
8	9	32.1
9	2	7.1
10	8	28.6
Total	28	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3.3 shows the rating of the effectiveness of coaching and mentorship program in future project leader development. The results showed that 10, 9 and 7 were most frequently selected, suggesting that participant predominantly perceived coaching and mentorship program as highly effective tools or strategy for building individual for future project leadership roles. However, the concentration of the participant towards the end of the upper scale is an indication of strong positive perception of the role of coaching and mentorship in developing leadership skills, project management potential and leadership competence.

Contribution of Mentorship/Coaching to Professional Growth

Table 3.4

Mentorship/coaching and professional growth

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very significantly	5	17.9
Significantly	12	42.9
Slightly	1	3.6
Moderately	9	32.1
Not at all	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to result in Table 3.4 majority of the participant s (42.9%) believed that mentorship and coaching program have contributed significantly to their professional growth, followed by 32% of the participant, agreeing that their professional growth have been contributed to moderately through mentorship and coaching program while 17.9% noted that the contribution of mentorship and coaching program to their professional growth is very significant. This results suggest that mentorship and coaching initiatives are generally viewed as valuable, effective and impactful mechanism and tools for supporting career growth and professional progressives as well as building skills and leadership capability.

Impact of Mentorship and Coaching on Leadership Competence

Fig 3.1

Role of mentorship/coaching toward professional competence improvement

professional competence

Category	Value
LONG-TERM CAREER PLANNING	3.43
ETHICAL AND SUSTAINABLE DECISION-MAKING	3.92
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND UNDERSTANDING...	7.35
RISK MANAGEMENT AND PROACTIVE DECISION-...	7.84
PROBLEM-SOLVING AND ANALYTICAL THINKING	9.31
SELF-REFLECTION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	6.86
TEAM COLLABORATION AND RELATIONSHIP...	10.29
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	7.84
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	6.37
CHANGE AND ADAPTABILITY	7.35
PLANNING AND ORGANIZING WORK	9.31
LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ABILITY TO MOTIVATE...	8.33
COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	11.76

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Fig 3.1 presents the role of mentorship/coaching in improving professional competence. Based on response of the respondents, communication and interpretation skill (11.76%), team collaboration and relationship building (10.29%), problem-solving and analytical thinking (9.231%) and adequate planning and organizing (9.231%) were the key areas of professional competence of the participant that had been improved through mentorship and coaching program, implying that mentorship and coaching are effective tools contributing to the core leadership competence development as well as development of interpersonal and practical capability useful for effective project leadership role in the future.

Other areas include conflict resolution (7.84%), risk management and proactive decision making (7.84%), change and adaptability (7.35), strategic alignment and understanding and understanding organizational context (7.35) and stakeholder engagement (6.37%). This suggest that mentorship and coaching. The improved communication and interpretation skill as a result of coaching and mentorship demonstrate the potential these career management strategies in assist project leader to clearly convey ideas and comprehend stakeholder needs and expectations and manage information effectively within project team. In the same vein, improvement of team collaboration and relationship building due to coaching and mentorship program reflect the significant role of coaching and mentorship in heightening innovative teamwork, trust building and enhancing interpersonal skills, which are vital for leading divers project team. As regaining improved problem-solving and analytical thinking caused by coaching and mentorship programs, reflect the potential and value of coaching and mentorship in strengthening decision making and reflective thinking capacity as well as supporting ability to systematically solve projects challenges. Lastly, improvement in task planning and organizing as a result of coaching and mentorship programs is an indication of the role coaching and mentorship programs plays in support building practical leadership capability needed to efficiently and effectively manage resources, time and project activities.

Fig 3.2

Impact of mentorship/coaching on Leadership competencies

Leadership competencies

Competency	Value
CHANGE LEADERSHIP	4.81
	4.28
STRATEGIC THINKING	5.88
	10.7
UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT	6.95
	9.09
TEAM MOTIVATION & ENGAGEMENT	10.16
	6.42
RISK & ISSUE MANAGEMENT	7.49
	9.63
SELF-AWARENESS & REFLECTION	4.81
	8.02
COMMUNICATION & INFLUENCE	11.76

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the analysis, leadership competence such as communication and influence has the highest percentage of 11.76, followed by project planning and control with 10.7%. Next is

the team motivation and engagement and decision making under uncertainty with 10.16% and 9.63%. This implies that mentorship and coaching play a significant role in improving, strategic, practical and interpersonal capabilities needed for effective project management and leadership. For instance, enhanced communication and influence implies that mentorship and coaching support clear expression of ideas and management of expectation across project team. Communication and influence are vital skills, strengthening leadership competence and effectiveness, capable of minimizing conflict, enhancing coordination and supporting successful project delivery. A reported by the participants that coaching and mentorship improves project planning and control, suggest that coaching and mentorship is capable of building leaders ability to structure tasks, adequately allocated resources, monitor progress and swiftly response to deviations or error from plan, reflecting the practical potentials of mentorship and coaching in shifting experiences-based knowledge, supporting effective and efficient project execution. Improved team engagement and motivation as a result of coaching and mentorship is an indication that coaching and mentorship attach value to ability of leaders to offer support, inspire, sustain and maintain team dedication, particularly in dynamic, and demanding project management environment. Improved decision making under uncertainty as a result of coaching and mentorship reflect the potential of coaching and mentorship in support leaders to address and handle risk and pressure, which re peculiar to project management environment.

Table 3.4

Multiple Regression analysis for examining the impact of coaching and mentorship on leadership competence

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.847[a]	0.717	0.654	7.758

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.748	2.130		.229	0.034

Mentorship	3.010	0.280	0.007	10.75	0.000
Coaching	2.530	0.299	0.248	8.461	0.000
F=63.814, Sig. =0.000[b]					

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3.4.presents the result of multiple regression for investigating influence of coaching and mentorship on leadership development. Result from table 4.4 shows that mentorship and coaching are strongly related with development of project leadership competence with correlation coefficient of 0.847. Coefficient of determination of .717 suggests that coaching and mentorship explained approximately 71.7% of variation in development of project leadership competence with remaining variation being attributed to other variables outside the estimated mode. Individually, coaching (t=8.461, p=0.00) and mentorship (t=10.75, p=0.00) exerts a positive significant influence on development of project leadership competence. While a unit increase in mentorship program results to 3.010 improvement in development project leadership competence within project management environment, a unit increase in coaching leads to 2.530 improvement in the development of project leadership competence within project management environment. The combination of mentorship and coaching programs contributes significantly to the development of project leadership competence (F=63.814, Sig. =0.000)

In order to validate the finding from the quantitative analysis, interview data collected from five participants were further subjected thematic analysis and the result are shown below.

3.2 Qualitative Analysis Section

Influence of coaching and mentorship on project leadership development leadership competence (Thematic analysis)

First Theme: Mentorship and Coaching as background for people centered leadership

Analysis of the interview data revealed that participants consistently highlighted that coaching and mentorship program transferred to them people centered leadership approach, rather task-oriented leadership approach.

Sub-theme One-Individuals dynamic over process

Base on response of the participants, mentorship and coaching influence individuals to become more team focus, placing greater value on team member and their interaction

rather than complex tools and procedure, which a characteristics of servant leadership approach. Servant leader prioritise serving people. As noted by P4, "looking at the initial stage of my career, coaching and mentoring taught me to often put into consideration individual dynamic rather than process" and this has shaped my development as a project leader. Coaching and mentorship taught me that success is more dependent on individual's ability to understand others, management relationship, communicate effectively with other and resolve conflict, particularly within remote team.

Sub-Theme Two- Leading people relies more on influence and trust than formal authority or position.

Participants believed that mentorship help them in understanding that leadership goes beyond formal authority or title, it is more about influence and trusts earned from others. According to P1, "one of the biggest lesson I learned was leading my team with no formal authority, where I have to rely on emotional intelligence, trust and influence rather than position.

Sub-theme three-Improve Ability to Understand and solve team problem

It was reported by the participants that mentorship/coaching program has potential to improve the leaders or individual ability understand and solve team problems. P3 in his view explained that coaching and mentoring subordinates can improve leader's ability to understanding the team needs. According to him "whenever a leader mentor or coach his/her subordinates, he or she begins to understand their challenges and thinking ability, which in turns enhance their leading ability and also improve the team". P3 explained further that as a mentor, "subordinates would bring problems which you are expected to solve, challenging you to think innovatively, conduct more research and grow as a leader

Sub-theme Four- Foster Open communication

Participant reported that through mentorship and coaching shape people's mind set in creating enabling environment, supporting open communication among team member. As reported by P2 coaching offer me help in prioritizing communication and psychological safety, particularly in the face of high-stake situation where team member are anxious and decision making had serious consequences. The opinions of the participants in theme one, suggest that coaching and mentorship play a vital roles in building relational competence and people centered leadership, which is vital for future project leaders operating in dynamic, complex team-based setting.

Second Theme: Development of communication skills and influence

Another theme observed from the analysis of interview data was enhanced communication skill and influence influenced by coaching and mentorship. R1 in her explanation, "mentorship and coaching shape individual ability to actively listen to other and create space for negotiation rather than threatening". R3 also noted that her ability to communicate effectively during crisis was developed through coaching and mentorship. Supporting this, R4 stated that mentoring required him to explain concept clearly which in turn improve his communication skills. The opinions from P1, P3 and P4 suggest that mentorship and coaching substantially enhance the ability of individuals to communicate effectively and manage stakeholder relationship, thus prepare them for future project leaders.

Third Theme: Problem solving and Decision-making ability

It was reported by the participants of this research that mentorship and coaching heighten their capacity solve problem and make accurate decision even in high pressure and uncertain project environment. According to P2 coaching support individual in making effective judgment during the time an organization is facing complex challenges. P4 in her explanation expressed that coaching provide me with support to become more effective rather than reactive, enabling me not make costly decision under pressure but assess the situation and put into consideration long term implication". This quote is in support of the ideas that coaching improve reflective leadership and critical thinking, which are vital leadership skills. P1 in his opinion explained that how mentorship had shaped his leadership mindset, according to him, mentorship has assisted me understanding how to justify decision like project delay to stakeholders, while still maintaining their loyalty, confidence and trust in the project". This reflect the potential of mentorship in decision justification and stakeholder engagement and management. P3 noted further that the ideas my mentors gave me during my early career were what I have been utilizing over the time to build and improve myself, structure solution adequately, particularly when the project direction is unclearly defined. This implies that role of mentorship in structuring solution under pressure and guiding career decision. These opinion combined demonstrate that coaching and mentorship improve leadership competence development by improving decision making and reflective judgment ability under ambiguity as well as strengthening individual potential to justify strategic decision within complex project environment.

Fourth Theme: Coaching/ mentorship as a tools for practical and experiential learning

From the result of thematic analysis, it was reported that Coaching/ mentorship could be more effective when it involved real world guidance, exposure and experience sharing. As reported by P4, "my career development and leadership growth stems from leading through

uncertainty and real team dynamic". In support of this, P3 noted that mentorship can shape technical and strategic career path by offering clear target and checklist as well as a way of thinking through complex situation and challenges. P2 confirmed the value of leaning through real organizational problem. According to P2, "My leadership ability come from coaching during real organizational problem, not from what I learned in school, forcing me to be able to think differently and innovately during high pressure time or situation". While P1 critised mentorship that does not support practical breakdown, he embrace mentorship style, explaining how and why certain decisions are made because according to him it help in understanding how to approach and addressing project management challenges.

These statement in theme four (4), reflect the role of mentorship and coaching as real life practical and experiential learning mechanism that foster development of strategic and innovative thinking, practical judgment skills, team management skills beyond theories and textbook based-knowledge

From the thematic analysis, could be observed that mentorship/coaching serves as background for people centered leadership, facilitate development of communication and influence skills, foster problem solving and decision making ability and serve as tools for practical and experiential learning.

Table 4.5

Summary of Findings: influence of mentorship and coaching on leadership competence development

Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Findings
Improved communication and influence	Mentorship and Coaching as background for people centered leadership
Improved project planning and control	Development of communication skills and influence
Improvement in team motivation and engagement	Improvement in problem solving and Decision making ability
Enhanced decision making under uncertainty	Coaching/ mentorship as a tools for practical and experiential learning

Source: Empirical Analysis and Result, 2025

Ways in which mentorship and coaching better prepare project leaders for the future of work

From the opinion of the participants using open ended questionnaire, respondents believed that mentorship and coaching can strengthen the core of behavioral leadership in people, building the skills that matter most in a fast-changing environment and allowed them to learn faster from real-world experience, navigate complex team dynamics, and make better decisions.

Other participants reported that mentorship and coaching strengthens communication, emotional intelligence, and adaptability skills that become even more important as technology and work models evolve. Thus, it allows future leaders adapt in a diverse workforce, AI programs, strategic planning, great communication skills, empathy, building trust, establishing people first-leadership etc. Some of the respondents were of the view that mentorship and coaching help in developing crucial soft skills like emotional intelligence and adaptability, fostering strategic thinking beyond routine tasks, and providing personalized guidance on navigating a dynamic, tech-enabled environment. As documented by respondents, mentorship and coaching can prepare future project leaders on strategic thinking, emotional intelligence and most importantly communication and stakeholder's management. Lastly, some survey respondents believed that they helps in building lasting skills that are gradually closing in like communication, adaptability, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. They help leaders learn from real-world experience, initiate change confidently, and develop approaches that work for diverse teams. Thus, it is very helpful to shape the mindset of individuals as they gain valuable insights from their Mentors.

3.3 Discussion and Implication of Findings

The aim of this research is to investigate coaching and mentorship and their role in improving leadership development within project management setting. Having scientifically analysed the collected data using both quantitative and qualitative ways, it was discovered that mentorship and coaching individually and jointly played a significant roles in significantly shaping leadership development, particularly leadership competence ($p<0.05$). This is consistent with the priori studies such as Martens & Carvalho (2014); Ghosh et al. (2019); Brightwork (2022); Forbes, (2025) highlighted that combination of mentorship and coaching ensures that emerging project leaders develop both strategic and operational competencies, enabling them to manage present projects effectively while preparing for future leadership responsibilities (APM, 2021; Brightwork, 2022). Organizations that invest in both approaches benefit from improved retention, enhanced leadership pipelines, and sustained project performance, aligning leadership development with sustainability principles (Martens & Carvalho, 2014).

Findings from both qualitative and quantitative approaches offer not only empirical fact but converging evidences showing that leadership competencies such as adequate project planning and control, communication and influence skills, team motivation and engagement and proper decision making under uncertainty were significantly improved by the mentorship and coaching program.

Qualitatively, development of communication and influence skills was one of the leadership competence emerged as the outcome of mentorship and coaching program, aligning with result obtained using qualitative approach where communication and influence skills was rated the most improved among leadership competencies under consideration as a result of influence of mentorship and coaching program. This suggest that mentorship/coaching programs not only help in building leaders ability but encourage them to actively listen more to their team, explain decision and adapt communication style to various subordinates. For instance, R4 explained that mentorship taught her to create dialog instead of displaying resistance, while P1 highlighted the important of clear communication with stakeholder to gain project buy in. These findings indicated that mentorship and coaching improve technical communication skills as well as relational and persuasive communication, which are very useful and important for leading project team effectively This is consistence with APM (2021) and Brightwork (2022) reported that within project management, mentorship enables aspiring leaders to navigate complex team dynamics, stakeholder relationships, and organizational culture

From quantitative data analysis, it was discovered that leadership competencies such as communication and influence skills, team motivation and engagement were among the most enhanced by mentorship and coaching initiatives. These results are highly supported by qualitative findings suggesting mentorship and coaching enable clear transformation of people to people centered leadership from task centered leadership approach. The interviewee maintained the important of developing trust, understanding team dynamic and manage interpersonal relationship. Particularly within remote project setting. Interviewee such as P1 and P4 noted that leadership effectiveness is more dependents of ability to influence, interact, engage and earn trust rather adherence to principle and process. P2 and P4 opinions that mentorship fosters psychological safety and enable leaders to learn about mentee challenges demonstrate the potential of coaching and mentorship in improving relational leadership competence. This findings align with CareerFit, (2023) documented that mentorship plays a pivotal role in cultivating leadership skills by providing emerging leaders with guidance, experiential knowledge, and psychosocial support

Another leadership competency, showing significant improvement as a result of influence of mentorship and coaching in both qualitative and quantitative analysis was decision making ability under pressure. According to the participants, through mentorship and coaching people development of ability become more confidence, analytical and reflective when navigating high pressure situation. P4 explained her transition from reactive to reflective decision maker as a result of mentorship and coaching. P1 and P4 also attribute their ability to make difficult decisions, particularly during project delay and ability to use structured approach to address poorly defined problem to role mentorship and coaching programs in enhancing decision making and problem solving capacity. This is supported by empirical studies such as Forbes, 2025 and Ghosh et al. (2019), highlighting highlight the positive impact of mentorship on leadership growth. For instance, mentees demonstrate higher confidence in decision-making, stronger relational skills, and increased readiness for higher responsibility roles

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research aimed as investigating mentorship and coaching and their roles influencing future leader development within project management setting. Mixed research approach was adopted for data collection and data analysis. Primary data were extracted from thirty three (33) participants across eight countries across Asia, Europe, Africa and America. Findings from regression analysis revealed that mentorship and coaching exerting a positive significant influence on leadership development, particularly leadership competence (F = 63.814, Sig. = 0.000). From the descriptive statistics, the major leadership competencies positively and significantly influenced by coaching and mentorship program were communication and influence skill, decision making ability under uncertainty, improve motivation and engagement and task planning and control. This findings was further supported by the result of thematic analysis, suggesting that mentorship and coaching help in transforming future leaders from having task oriented leadership mindset to people (team) centered leadership mindset. Additionally, mentorship and coaching was found to bring improvement to the reflective thinking, confidence, problem solving potential and practical judgment, which are competencies needed by the future project manager and leader to response more swiftly and effectively to real word organizational challenges. The study therefore conclude that coaching and mentorship are vital developmental approaches, mechanism and tools for developing competent, resilient, and team centered project leaders, capable of managing uncertain and tem centered challenges.

Recommendations

Given the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance leadership development through mentorship and coaching within project based organizations:

1. **Institutionalization of coaching and mentorship framework**
   Project based organizations should formally institutionalize structured coaching and mentorship programs within their leadership development frameworks rather than treating them as informal or ad hoc initiatives. These programs should be embedded within ongoing project activities to allow emerging leaders to acquire competencies through real project experiences. Human resource departments in collaboration with project management offices (PMOs). Should establish clear program objectives. Mentor mentee matching criteria, defined duration and evaluation mechanisms. This recommendation is justified by the studies empirical findings which revealed a significant positive influence of mentorship and coaching on leadership competencies.

2. Targeted development of core leadership competencies

Mentorship and coaching initiatives should deliberately prioritize the development of communication and influence skills, decision making under uncertainty, motivation, engagement, and task planning and control. Given that these competencies were identified as the most significantly influenced by mentorship and coaching in the descriptive analysis, program contents should be designed to address real communication challenges, stakeholder management issues and decision making scenarios commonly encountered in project management. Practical simulations, role-playing exercises, and project-based problem-solving activities should be incorporated to reinforce learning outcomes and improve leadership effectiveness.

3. Engagement of experienced project leaders as mentors

Project management organizations should actively encourage experienced project managers and senior project leaders to participate as mentors within formal mentorship schemes. Their practical knowledge, contextual understanding, and exposure to complex project challenges are essential for developing problem solving and decision making capabilities and less experienced leaders. Organizations should provide initiatives, recognition, and training to mentors to ensure consistency, commitment, and efficiency. Or effectiveness In knowledge transfer.

4. Promotion of reflective practices through coaching

Coaching sessions should be structured to promote reflective thinking and continuous learning among emerging project leaders. Coaching should support leaders in critically evaluating their actions, learning from past project experiences, and enhancing judgment, particularly in uncertain and dynamic environments. Reflective tools such as learning journals, post-project reviews, feedback loops and guided reflection frameworks should be incorporated to strengthen leadership self-awareness and adaptability, and long term professional growth.

5. Use of practical and experimental learning tools in mentorship programs.

Mentorship programs should move beyond theoretical and classroom based approaches by incorporating practical tools such as checklists, real time feedback mechanisms, case discussions, goal-setting frameworks, and life project problem analysis. This approach aligns with the study thematic findings, which indicated a shift from task oriented to people centered leadership as result of mentorship and coaching. Practical

instruments enable mentees to translate leadership concepts into actionable behaviors, thereby improving leadership effectiveness in real organizational contexts.

Recommendations for future research

Despite the contributions of this study, certain limitations present opportunities for future research. The increase in prevalence of remote and hybrid work arrangements limited direct human interaction and posed challenges in conducting the longitudinal components of this research. Future studies are therefore recommended to further investigate mentorship and coaching. Practices within virtual and hybrid project environments, where leadership development increasingly occurs through digital and technical technology mediated interactions.

Future research may adopt alternative longitudinal research designs that leverage virtual observation methods, scheduled follow-up interviews, digital ethnography and online reflective tools to capture leadership development processes over extended periods. Such approaches may provide deeper insight into how mentorship and coaching influence the sustainability of leadership competencies when physical co-presence is limited.

Additionally, future studies could explore comparative analysis between face-to-face, hybrid, and fully remote mentorship and coaching models to assess differences in leadership development outcomes. This could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how contextual factors such as work modeling modality and organizational structure influences the effectiveness of mentorship and coaching interventions in project based environments.

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APPENDIX I (QUESTIONNAIRE)

Questionnaire: The Role of Mentorship and Coaching in Developing Future Project Leaders

You are invited to participate in a research study titled 'The Role of Mentorship and Coaching in Developing Future Project Leaders.' The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand how mentorship and coaching influence the development of leadership competencies among project professionals across different countries and industries. Your responses will remain anonymous unless you voluntarily provide your email for a follow-up interview. Participation is voluntary, and you may skip any question you are not comfortable answering. The questionnaire takes approximately 8-10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your contribution to the research and for supporting the advancement of project leadership development.

*indicates required question

Section A: Background Information Section

1. Country of practice*
2. Industry or sector (kindly specify industry or sector if it is not listed) *
   - IT
   - Construction
   - Healthcare
   - Education
   - Manufacturing
   - Consultaion
   - Finance and Banking
   - Energy
   - Logistics
   - Other:
3. Current job title/ Role*
4. Years of experience in Project Mangement*
   - Less than 2 years
   - 2-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - More than 10 years
5. Project management certification held (if any). Kindly specific if different from the options
   - PMP
   - PRINCE 2
   - Agile/Scrum(CSM, PSM, etc..)

- IPMA
- Google PM Certificate
- Prince 2 Practioner
- Lean Six Sigma
- None
- Other:

Section B : Experience with Mentorship and Coaching

6. Have you participated in a formal mentorship pr coaching program related to project management?
    - Yes, as trainer
    - Yes, as Trainee
    - Yes, as both Trainer and Trainee
    - None

7. Have you participated in a formal mentorship or coaching program related to project management ? (trainer)
    - Yes, Coaching
    - Yes, Mentorship
    - Both
    - None

8. Have you participated in a formal mentorship or coaching program related to project management ? (trainer)
    - Yes, Coaching
    - Yes, Mentorship
    - Both
    - None

9. What was the duration of your mentorship/coaching experience? (As Trainer or Trainee)
    - Less than 3months
    - 3-6 months
    - 6-12 months
    - More than 1year
    - Other:

10. What was the frequency of interaction with mentor/coach?
    - Weekly

- o Biweekly
- o Monthly
- o Occasionally (as needed)

11. What was the primary mode of interaction?*
- o In person
- o Virtual/Online
- o Hybrid

12. Rate the overall effectiveness of mentorship /coaching experience(1-10) *

Section C : Perceived Impact on Professional Growth

13. To what extent has mentorship/coaching contribution to your professional growth? *
- o Not at all
- o Slightly
- o Moderately
- o Significantly
- o Very Significant

14. Which areas of your professional competence have improved through mentorship/coaching (People and Practice competence); select all that apply
- o Communication and interpersonal skills
- o Conflict resolution
- o Team collaboration and relationship building
- o Self reflection and emotional intelligence
- o Leadership style and ability to motivate others
- o Problem solving and analytical thinking
- o Risk management and proactive decision making
- o Planning and organizing work
- o Stakeholder engagement
- o Change and adaptability
- o Strategic alignment and understanding organizational context
- o Ethical and sustainable decision making
- o Long term career planning
- o Other:

15. What was the most valuable lesson or insight gained from your mentor or coach ?*

Section D : Leadership Competences Development

16. Which leadership competence improved as a result of mentorship/coaching? (Select all that apply) (interpersonal/behavioral)
    o   Communication & influence
    o   Emotional intelligence
    o   Team motivation and engagement
    o   Self awareness and reflection
    o   Conflict management
    o   Risk and issues management
    o   Decision making under uncertainty
    o   Project planning and control
    o   Stakeholder management
    o   Strategic thinking
    o   Sustainability and ethical leadership
    o   Understanding organizational context
    o   Change leadership
    o   Other:
17. Describe one situation where mentorship or coaching directly influenced your project leadership performance.
18. How sustainable are these leadership improvement in your project management practice?
    o   Not sustainable
    o   Somewhat sustainable
    o   Mostly sustainable
    o   Fully integrated into my practice

Section E : The Future of Project Leadership

19. What qualities do you believe define project leaders? *
    o   High emotional intelligence
    o   Ability to lead diverse and cross cultural team
    o   Coaching and people development mindset
    o   Strong communication and collaboration
    o   Digital and technology literacy
    o   Data driven decision making
    o   Innovation and creative problem solving

- o   High adaptability and long term value orientation
- o   Ethical and responsible leadership
- o   Sustainability and long term value orientation
- o   Strategic foresight and systems thinking
- o   Ability to navigate complex stakeholder environments
- o   Other:

20. In your words, how can mentorship and coaching better prepare project leaders for the future of work?

21. What would you recommend organizations do to strengthen mentorship and coaching for project managers?

Section F : Consent and Follow Up

22. Would you be open to a follow up interview (approximately 30 minutes) ? *
- o   Yes
- o   No

23. If yes, please provide your email address

APPENDIX II (INTERVIEW GUIDE)

Title of study : The Role of Mentorship and Coaching in Developing future Project Leaders

Introduction

Thank you for your participation in this study. The aim of this interview is to explore your experience with mentorship and coaching, and how these have influenced your development as a project leader. With your permission, this interview will be recorded for research purposes only and your identity will remain anonymous.

Section A: Background and Professional Experience

I. Can you describe briefly your professional background and experience in project or product management?
II. What has inpacted your growth level in your field?

Section B: Mentorship and Coaching Experience/ Reflections

I. Have you participated in any mentorship or coaching programs? Formal or informal? Explain…
II. What challenges did tou face at the interim phase of your career? And what helped you grow and navigate this challenge?
III. How did mentorship and coaching support your leadership development?
IV. What aspects of coaching and mentorship has played vital roles in your project management experience? What visible roles did it play?
V. Can you reflect and share moments when the competencies developed from mentorship or coaching was greatly instrumental to your work?

Section C: Additional Insights / Relevance of Mentorship and Coaching

I. With your experiences and reflections, would you agree or disagree that mentorship and coaching plays a role in the growth of future project leaders? If yes, Why so?
II. What makes one a project management professional a good mentor or coach?
III. What would you recommend new and future project leaders do to gain the best experience with mentors and coaches?

Conclusion

I appreciate you for giving me your time and sharing your insight in my research. Your contribution has been invaluable. Thank you very much and have a pleasant day!

APPENDIX III (RAW SPSS OUTPUT)

Country

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Canada	1	3.6	3.6	3.6
	Italy	1	3.6	3.6	7.1
	Lithuania	19	67.9	67.9	75.0
	Germany	1	3.6	3.6	78.6
	Nigeria	3	10.7	10.7	89.3
	Pakistan	1	3.6	3.6	92.9
	United Kingdom	1	3.6	3.6	96.4
	United States of America	1	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Industry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	auditing authority	1	3.6	3.6	3.6
	Construction	1	3.6	3.6	7.1
	Consultation	1	3.6	3.6	10.7
	Finace and Banking	6	21.4	21.4	32.1
	Global Business Services	1	3.6	3.6	35.7
	Healthcare	8	28.6	28.6	64.3

IT	8	28.6	28.6	92.9
Logistics	1	3.6	3.6	96.4
TV and event production	1	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2–5 years	13	46.4	46.4	46.4
	6–10 years	2	7.1	7.1	53.6
	Less than 2 years	7	25.0	25.0	78.6
	More than 10 years	6	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Project_managment_certification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Google PM Certificate	2	7.1	7.1	7.1
	IPMA	1	3.6	3.6	10.7
	Lean SIx Sigma	2	7.1	7.1	17.9
	None	11	39.3	39.3	57.1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
None, I've done Masters in Software Project Management, now pursuing MS	1	3.6	3.6	60.7
None, None currently, but I have gained practical project coordination	1	3.6	3.6	64.3
Other	1	3.6	3.6	67.9
PMP	6	21.4	21.4	89.3
PMP, diploma of leadership and management	1	3.6	3.6	92.9
PMP, Google PM Certificate	1	3.6	3.6	96.4
PRINCE2	1	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Have you participated in a formal mentorship or coaching program related to project management?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	7	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Yes, as both Trainer and Trainee	8	28.6	28.6	53.6
	Yes, As Trainee	13	46.4	46.4	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Have you participated in a formal mentorship or coaching program related to project management? (Trainer)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Both	6	21.4	21.4	21.4
	None	18	64.3	64.3	85.7
	Yes (coaching)	2	7.1	7.1	92.9
	Yes (Mentorship)	2	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

What was the duration of your mentorship/coaching experience ? (As Trainer or Trainee)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Both	7	25.0	25.0	25.0
	None	8	28.6	28.6	53.6
	Yes (coaching)	5	17.9	17.9	71.4
	Yes (Mentorship)	8	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

What was the duration of your mentorship/coaching experience ? (As Trainer or Trainee)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3–6 months	9	32.1	32.1	32.1
	3hrs LinkedIn PM course.	1	3.6	3.6	35.7
	6–12 months	4	14.3	14.3	50.0
	Less than 3 months	9	32.1	32.1	82.1
	More than 1 year	3	10.7	10.7	92.9
	N/A	1	3.6	3.6	96.4
	None	1	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

What was the frequency of interaction with mentor/coach?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Biweekly	5	17.9	17.9	17.9
	Monthly	1	3.6	3.6	21.4
	Occasionally (as needed)	13	46.4	46.4	67.9
	Weekly	9	32.1	32.1	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

What was the primary mode of interaction?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hybrid	8	28.6	28.6	28.6

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
In-person	12	42.9	42.9	71.4
Virtual/online	8	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Rate the overall effectiveness of your mentorship/coaching experience (1–10)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	7.1	7.1	7.1
	10	8	28.6	28.6	35.7
	4	1	3.6	3.6	39.3
	5	1	3.6	3.6	42.9
	6	1	3.6	3.6	46.4
	7	4	14.3	14.3	60.7
	8	9	32.1	32.1	92.9
	9	2	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

To what extent has mentorship/coaching contributed to your professional growth?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderately	9	32.1	32.1	32.1
	Not at all	1	3.6	3.6	35.7

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Significantly	12	42.9	42.9	78.6
	Slightly	1	3.6	3.6	82.1
	Very significantly	5	17.9	17.9	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Which areas of your professional competence have improved through mentorship/coaching? (People and Practice competencies); Select all that apply

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Communication and interpersonal skills	1	3.6	3.6	3.6
	Communication and interpersonal skills, Conflict resolution, Planning and organizing work, Stakeholder engag	1	3.6	3.6	7.1
	Communication and interpersonal skills, Conflict resolution, Problem-solving and analytical thinking, Risk m	1	3.6	3.6	10.7
	Communication and interpersonal skills, Conflict resolution, Self-reflection and emotional intelligence, Pro	1	3.6	3.6	14.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Communication and interpersonal skills, Conflict resolution, Team collaboration and relationship building, L	1	3.6	3.6	17.9
	Communication and interpersonal skills, Conflict resolution, Team collaboration and relationship building, S	9	32.1	32.1	50.0
	Communication and interpersonal skills, Leadership style and ability to motivate others, Planning and organi	1	3.6	3.6	53.6
	Communication and interpersonal skills, Leadership style and ability to motivate others, Problem-solving and	1	3.6	3.6	57.1

Which areas of your professional competence have improved through mentorship/coaching? (People and Practice competencies); Select all that apply

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Communication and interpersonal skills, Planning and organizing work, Stakeholder engagement	1	3.6	3.6	60.7

Communication and interpersonal skills, Problem-solving and analytical thinking	1	3.6	3.6	64.3
Communication and interpersonal skills, Team collaboration and relationship building, Leadership style and a	2	7.1	7.1	71.4
Communication and interpersonal skills, Team collaboration and relationship building, Risk management and pr	1	3.6	3.6	75.0
Communication and interpersonal skills, Team collaboration and relationship building, Self-reflection and em	1	3.6	3.6	78.6
Conflict resolution, Leadership style and ability to motivate others, Problem-solving and analytical thinkin	1	3.6	3.6	82.1
Team collaboration and relationship building, Long-term career planning	1	3.6	3.6	85.7

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Team collaboration and relationship building, Problem-solving and analytical thinking, Risk management and p	1	3.6	3.6	89.3

Which areas of your professional competence have improved through mentorship/coaching? (People and Practice competencies); Select all that apply

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Team collaboration and relationship building, Risk management and proactive decision-making, Planning and or	1	3.6	3.6	92.9
	Team collaboration and relationship building, Risk management and proactive decision-making, Stakeholder eng	1	3.6	3.6	96.4
	Team collaboration and relationship building, Self-reflection and emotional intelligence, Leadership style a	1	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

Competence	Frequencies	Percentage

Communication and interpersonal skills	24	11.76
Leadership style and ability to motivate others	17	8.33
Planning and organizing work	19	9.31
Change and adaptability	15	7.35
Stakeholder engagement	13	6.37
Conflict resolution	16	7.84
Team collaboration and relationship building	21	10.29
Self-reflection and emotional intelligence	14	6.86
Problem-solving and analytical thinking	19	9.31
Risk management and proactive decision-making	16	7.84

Strategic alignment and understanding organizational context	15	7.35
Ethical and sustainable decision-making	8	3.92
Long-term career planning	7	3.43
Total	204	100.00

Competence	Frequencies	Percentage
Communication & influence	22	11.76
Emotional intelligence	15	8.02
Self-awareness & reflection	9	4.81
Decision-making under uncertainty	18	9.63
Risk & issue management	14	7.49
Stakeholder managemen	12	6.42

Team motivation & engagement	19	10.16
Conflict management	17	9.09
Understanding organizational context	13	6.95
Project planning & control	20	10.70
Strategic thinking	11	5.88
Sustainability & ethical leadership	8	4.28
Change leadership	9	4.81
Total	187	100.00

APPENDIX IV (TRANSCRIBTION)

Transcript

December 23, 2025, 8:09AM

Researcher started transcription

Researcher   0:03
Hello, how are you doing today, Mr. Respondent?

Respondent   0:07
Well, not bad. Looking forward to the Christmas holidays. So yeah, super excited.

Researcher   0:13
OK, that's great. So I've been following you on LinkedIn and it's quite amazing to actually see your level of involvement with project management team PMP, your activities and all. So I'd like to know, tell me a little bit about yourself and your experience. In project management.

Respondent   0:35
That's a very interesting question, but I'll say I have a background in engineering. I studied electrical, electric, electrical, electronics, engineering, my bachelor's and then I started working in the engineering sector. So I was a.

Researcher   0:47
OK.

Respondent   0:52
Project planning engineer managing basically engineering, design, procurement, construction activities that we need for some couple of projects in the oil and gas industry. I'll say that kind of like you know, sets the pace for my career in project management because of the planning phase   is   like   a   phase   or. Session in project management and I was able to collaborate with like you know my leadership in terms of project management and also kind of like you know give them real time up to date

regarding our project performance and in terms of budget as well and how we could basically save cost and over the time while I was. I was doing all this. I was basically like, you know, channeling my energy into like the project management. I was I was aspiring to become a project manager and in that course I needed to like, you know, upgrade my skill set in terms of my knowledge. So I went for my master's degree program.

But I didn't want my masters to be just centralized in project management because for the skill set I already have. But I also wanted to have like, you know, the knowledge in the areas of like business management. So I did my masters in electronics business management, which was like an integration of project management and business management. It was a. Very good strategic move. So I moved to Lithuania 2019 to do my master's degree. And then I got to Lithuania and then I realized like, you know, we didn't have like the construction part of the industry in Lithuania. So I needed to switch my career from engineering, construction to IT. So it was at that moment I said it. Channeling my efforts into becoming, you know, a competent project manager. And one of the phases was like, you know, for me to get the certification. So I started preparing for my certificate program while I was studying, you know, and then becoming, you know, very good contributor to the PMI organization. which is the PMI Litriner chapter. So I tried the PMI Litriner chapter, started getting knowledge and also collaborating on other PMI projects. And then once I was done with my studies, I sat in for my PMP, right? And then with that I was able to like, you know, break even into the industry. So I switched my career. Area first of all from construction to IT, which kind of gives me a leverage to understand what you know IT wasn't about and all the kind of things. And then I manage some kind of products management in terms of software development and the web applications as well. So for a very good reputable company. In Lithuania and I would like to pick up my carrier as anyway. So we started off with that again my certification collaborated with PMI and then with that I kind of like you know had a in depth knowledge of how to manage projects, execute projects successfully and also the key thing which like you know stakeholders really like is to save cost so. That was how I kind of transitioned into project management fully.

CO   Researcher   3:52

It's quite a journey you've had from engineering to IT to project management. Do you miss engineering?

Respondent 4:00

I'll say a little bit, you know, there's a difference. There's there's a real gap. I would say for IT it's all about systems, systems, system. But for engineering you have both systems that you have like you know, the active activity that you have to do. So that active activity, I kind of really missed it. So in order for me to balance it. I do a lot of like, you know, I consultancy for like, you know, engineering firms, right. And then also I kind of like, you know, indulge myself. It's outdoor activities, just not to like, you know, miss that lifestyle as well.

Researcher 4:26

OK, that's fine. So looking back at your career as a project manager, what would you say or how would you describe your leadership development as a project manager over time?

Respondent 4:47

Oh, that's a very interesting question. So they'll say some people are, you know, they grow into leadership and then they said some people are born leaders, right? I'll say for me, I needed to grow into leadership because again, when I started my career. Was.
Like, you know, under some leaders who I needed to learn and adopt some of the skill sets, right. So I have a couple of mentors which I kind of like, you know, worked with, kind of put me, you know, in the right directions in order for me not to be misguided and be able to do things efficiently and effectively. So I had.

Researcher 5:14

Mhm.

Respondent 5:27

Mentors who kind of like, you know, mentored me and shaped me into having that leadership skills. So it's not, I wasn't born a leader, but gradually, gradually I kind of like, you know, watched people who are leaders, people that I kind of aspire to be. And it was a little bit difficult, like, you know, talking to them and saying. Hey, I want you to be my mentor. I mean, I felt like, would he have my time? Would this happen? I had those questions and then I needed to like, you know, check the boxes before, you know, approaching them. So I I did that and then I had a couple of mentors kind of work

me   through   that   leadership   skill   set.
And then, yeah, I'm so grateful to them for being supportive and also like, you know, giving me that proper guidance.

Researcher   6:10
Oh, nice, nice. So you have been a product of mentorship.

Respondent   6:16
Oh, yes, I have. I have been a product of mentorship and then I've also had the opportunity to, you know, be a mentor to some other project managers.

Researcher   6:18
Great.
Oh, very good, very good, very good. Passing down the the torchlight I see.

Respondent   6:29
Exactly. I mean, that's the door to cascade your knowledge, right? So at least you know you have other people who also should be as competent as you are as well, so, so.

Researcher   6:40
OK, OK, that's fine. So I would, I would ask, in what ways do you think mentorship or coaching has influenced you to see yourself as a project leader?

Respondent   6:53
Oh, I would say on a scale of one to 10, I'll say 9.5 or even possible 9.9999, because again, without without the right mentor, if you feel like you know you wanted to, I mean, this is just.

Researcher   7:04
OK.

Respondent   7:13
my own opinion. If I wanted to like go through the channel of like you know learning and improving myself, which is totally fine, a lot of people cannot do that, but having that

opportunity to be mentored kind of like you know give me that quick grasp of how to build my career path and how to channel my energy into the right resources. Rather than learning everything, I just kind of narrowed down to what is basically important to myself and also what my leaders are pretty much looking for for me to deliver to them. So I'll say mentorship kind of played a major role with my career growth.

Researcher 7:46

OK, so part of my argument for my thesis is that a lot of young professionals in the project field are not being given much room to grow because a lot of companies require people who have experiences.

Respondent 8:02

Good experience.

Researcher 8:03

So, and This is why my my questioning about project mentorship and coaching comes in. So I'm like, if we're not given the room to be coached, to be mentored, to have practical experiences, we're all just going to have like classroom knowledge. So how?

Respondent 8:11

Mhm.
Yeah.

Researcher 8:23

How do you think this is going to be factored in? How do you think or do you First off, do you think my argument about this is correct? Do you think it's factual for new project leaders? And how do you think we're going to put this down in the system for new upcoming project leaders like me?

Respondent 8:31

Mm-hmm.
So, yeah, to your first question, I'll say yes, your argument is 100% correct because without that platform and enablement community or an environment, people just kind of like, you know, they're just all over the place without any sense of direction, right? Your day, I mean, you're

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only going to be working. With your thoughts and then when you're not coming to like a proper organization, so you're just like, you know, working with based on your imagination with a clarity and understanding on how you should drive project, right. And that's where mentorship kind of like, you know, plays a visual role. So in. In order to like, you know, implement a strategy that's just going to be beneficial for upcoming project managers, one of the key things I would say is, you know, improve your soft skills. That's one basically. And secondly, join communities that kind of like foster project management activities. So I'm just going to use myself as a typical example. I didn't start my career as a perfect project manager. I had to climb that ladder gradually, step by step. And the first thing I did was for myself. I kind of like, you know, this project management training. I asked a whole lot of questions around project management and how to navigate the project management environment and then with the trainees and then the little soft skill set that I had, I was able to break into the labour markets by defending. The knowledge that I already gathered. So knowledge is like you know the key to building your skill sets and then also actively participating in project management community kind of like you know gives you a little bit of that leverage to like you know get into project management and then last but not the least is to get a very good mentor. I'll always exercise with mentorship. It's really helps.

Researcher 10:30

OK, great, great. So with your perceived experiences and with coaching and also mentorship, what do you think or what do you perceive the long term effect of continuous mentorship and coaching for new project leaders will yield?

Respondent 10:49

Continuous mentorship is, you know, I would say it's viable if that's the right word to use or it's valuable. Why? Because you know in the in the environment of project management. There are always going to be trends. They're going to be always like, you know, innovations of best practices and also there would also be like, you know, some tools or skill set that might be introduced in order for you to manage project efficiently. I will see this in in PMI which is the project management institute where we had to like you know adopt new methodologies of doing things. We started with the waterfall and then we grew into agile and then we went to the scrum and then you know different kind of like you know methodologies of managing project but having a mentor who has gone through this whole phase just.

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Kind of like you know gives you very huge advantage because they will be able to like you know again narrow you down to skill set that will be required for you to like you know execute projects effectively. It's always good to have knowledge about everything, but you need to know what particular skill set you need to apply to a particular project because they call. with different scope and different phases.

CO
Researcher   12:03

OK. OK. OK. So I think we have dwelled a lot on the positive parts for and how it has helped your career, but I'm going to have to mix it a bit, but I would like you to dwell a bit on what has hindered you. So my question will be what are the factors that has helped or hindered you from sustaining?

C
Respondent   12:12

Mhm.

CO
Researcher   12:23

Leadership improvements gains during your mentorship and coaching overtime.

C
Respondent   12:28

Negative impacts. So I'll start with cultural differences, right? That's that's a very huge impact. And how do I even get to navigate that? I didn't like adapt. So I would say cultural differences because we we have people of different background and different cultures and we're all coming together to like, you know, collaborate and work. And you know, the way the world is right now is we have people sitting in different geo locations. You you cannot miss that so. Different organizations want to be globally recognized. So they have to like, you know, build offices in different virtual locations. And the challenge I had I would say regarding one of my mentor was he was I think Spanish, he was Spanish and then you know we we had different. Ways of understanding ourself. Like, you know, if you say something, I thought about it in a different perspective and then I go to a secure and then I come back and then it says no, no, no, no, no, no, this is not what I meant. This is this, this is that, this is, you know, it was, it was a little bit of a hustle. So I needed to like, you know, understand. OK, we have a different ways of understanding things and the way I kind of like navigated that was like, you know, retrace everything that kind of says based on understanding that he has. So if you say something I need to clarify with him, I like, you know, speaking back to him and

say, hey, this is what I understand for what you've just said. Does it, you know, resonate to? What you're trying to communicate. And with that I was able to like, you know, pick the pace and gradually right now if he says anything, I understand like you know, if he starts speaking, I understand where he's heading. So because I've already grew like you know that synergy with him and understanding and you know, clarifying that differences. So it was a huge gap I would say.

It was a negative impact because something that was supposed to done within a few minutes we took it took us like you know a couple of days and not going into it but it took us a couple of days you know that for us there is a cure that but with over time like you know he had patients I had patients as well too and I really appreciate him for that. So with that we're able to like you know understand ourselves and then. Properly.

Researcher   14:44

Oh, great. So basically your your only negative aspect when it came to project management was cultural difference and communication pattern. Oh, oh, great, great.

Respondent   14:54

Exactly, yeah. And and I was, the reason why I say that is because project management is globally, you know, we have global standards that we are basically utilizing to manage projects. So there's no differences in that. The only gaps that was there was just like, you know, understanding and then you know, trying to like align whatever communication.

Researcher   15:08

OK.

Respondent   15:14

That we had.

Researcher   15:17

OK, great, great. So from a professional project manager in your field to a newbie and an upcoming project manager, what would you advise my skill set to be?

Respondent   15:30

Everybody asks this question, but I would say don't be like me, right? Because, you know, again, like I mentioned earlier that I had a background in engineering, coming from engineering to, you know, IT and then now we do from a. industry, I had to juggle a whole lot. But I would say the skill set I would recommend for you to like, you know, understand perfectly will be your communication skills. Communication skills plays a major, major role in project management as a leader, you know, as a team player. Yeah, and also like, you know, probably a contributor to the team as well. So communication plays a major role. Another skill set I would recommend is your leadership skill. That's also kind of like, you know, plays a major role in project management because you want people to listen to you when you speak so. Communication and leadership does goes hand in hand, right? You can. You cannot miss that. Another soft skill I would recommend is your project management skills. I would like for you or upcoming project managers to learn, you know, before going into the field to also have a basic understanding of how project management works. The different phases we have in project management and the different methodologies we kind of use in managing project. You might not really have practiced the skill, but having an understanding on how the skill set and how those different methodologies plays in different project   lifecycle.

Is a very huge advantage and when it comes to the tools that I would recommend, there are a whole lot of tools out there right today that are basically utilized for project management. But I would say the reason why I had had advantage was because I helped to build some of the tools so I understand logics behind. But the major tools I would recommend are tools like Jira. Jira is a very good tool. Jira, asana, money.com. Those tools are basically like they do the same thing, but like you just have different interface, but just understand the logic behind those tools. Learn how to use that tools to like drive project management. And also how to like basically automate some processes that would really, really help. So those are like stock skills that should be, you know, expand that for all project management. And the last but not the least is your attention to details and your analytical skills. So those kind of like, you know, contribute a lot.

Researcher   17:56

OK.

OK. Thank you very much. I'll put all that into consideration. Thank you.

Respondent   18:05

I know I I mean not to overwhelm you, but like as those will be very good to have skills and if you have that, you have a major advantage to like you know other entry projects, project managers as well.

Researcher　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　18:07

I appreciate.

OK, that's fine. So my last question would probably be when you saw my project topic, my thesis topic and the questionnaires when you were going through with and maybe during this interview as well, the question I have asked, do you think?

Respondent　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　18:28

Mhm.

Researcher　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　18:35

What I am trying to achieve or my project topic is instrumental to the growth or the institution as a project manager or as a project management in general. Do you think the topic is instrumental and would yield a positive result to project leaders?

Respondent　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　18:50

Yeah. So it took me, I'm just going to be honest with this. It took me two days to complete that form. And the reason was that I wanted to like, you know, resonate with the questions as I was kind of filling them in and understand the logic behind those questions and what kind of answer.

Researcher　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　18:56

Sure.

OK.

OK.

Respondent　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　19:10

as you are pretty much looking for, right, based on like you know the survey. And I'm just going to read out the question again, the role of mentorship and coaching in developing future projects leaders. That was the first thing I kind of digested and then I went through into the questions and it was very, very nice curated question.

Researcher   19:12

OK, OK.

Respondent   19:29

They were basically touching the points and then I think my feedback was I was being honest with the answers and then I provided you those feedback and I'd say it's it's a very good topic being that a whole lot of people kind of like struggle with the project management industry I've seen.

Researcher   19:37

Right.

OK.

OK.

Respondent   20:12

But if they have walked down the path of having a very good mentors who kind of walk them through, you know, cycles of different project management and then based on the experience, guide them on how to like to navigate such storms, I think it would have played a major role for   them   to   like,   you   know.

Go through the projects, understand what is needed to be done and ask the relevant questions back to the stakeholder before like, you know, forming the team and going through all those processes, right. So I'll say mentorship, that's where it comes into play a major role. And like I mentioned, I've since a couple of people will make mistakes and then have to navigate through the whole entire.

Researcher   20:33

Oh   ****.

Yeah.

Respondent   20:48

That chaos to like get back on track and before you know it, time is lost, right? But if we have a clarity and understanding on what to do, I guess that would have helped. And in a situation like this where you don't even know like myself, I'll say learning is everyday cycle in a situation where I don't get to understand what I.

Researcher 21:06

OK.

Respondent 21:08

Need to do after going through over and over again, I just pull up my mentor and then we kind of have a discussion and we kind of like you know discuss through what's this to be done. Some things need to be confidential. So I just give a very high level summary of what I'm trying to accomplish and then they just give me the step guide and trust me that has been very instrumental and.

For in resolving most of my issues. So my mentors play a major role to my career success right now and then I'm very, very always appreciative to them, especially my LinkedIn post. I never miss calling them out to say, hey, you know you contributed to this success. I couldn't have done this without you. So yeah, kudos to all of them.

Researcher 21:35

It's great.

Oh, thank you so, so much. I have really learned a lot from you. Thank you for also giving me your time. I really appreciate this as well. And I hope in the future, in the future as well, if I get to reach out to you to say, hey, I need a mentor, I hope you would be available.

Respondent 21:57

I don't know why it's.

Definitely. Like I mentioned, I I I have some couple of people who are under my mentorship. I'm trying to like, you know, help them navigate their career into project management. So yeah, if you would like any proper guidance, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to like, you know, reach out so that we can work.

Researcher 22:05

So.

Yes.

Respondent 22:25

Sure.

Researcher 22:25

Thank you. Thank you. Really appreciate. Thank you so much, Mr. Respondent. This has been so instrumental to my thesis work. Thank you so much. I appreciate. Yeah.

Respondent 22:29

Yeah, I think, yeah. You're welcome.

Researcher 22:37

Thank you so much. Thank you. Do have an amazing day. OK.

Respondent 22:40

All right. And you too. Bye.

Researcher 22:43

Bye.