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# **A Qualitative Exploration of the effect of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)-based coaching on emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership development among African Managers**

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**Abstract.** Background: Leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence (EI) have become essential for organizational success, particularly among African executives navigating complex socio-cultural and global business environments. Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)-based coaching, has been proposed as a transformative approach to developing these competencies. However, empirical research on its impact within the African context remains limited. This study therefore explores how NLP-based coaching influences EI and leadership development among African managers. Methods: A qualitative design was adopted involving in-depth semi-structured interviews with 21 African executives purposively selected from a prior survey of 394 respondents. Participants represented diverse sectors, including public, private, academic, and not-for-profit organizations. Data were analyzed thematically using NVivo software to identify psychological processes and behavioral outcomes emerging from NLP-based coaching. Ethical approval and informed consent were obtained, with confidentiality assured throughout. Results: Participants reported that NLP techniques such as reframing, anchoring, and meta-model questioning facilitated self-reflection, emotional control, adaptive communication, and increased leadership authenticity. These psychological shifts translated into improved decision-making, greater empathy, and stronger team engagement across organizational contexts. Conclusion: NLP-based coaching demonstrated significant potential in fostering emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviors among African executives.

**Keywords.** Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Development, Coaching, Transformational Leadership

## **1. Introduction**

Leadership and emotional intelligence (EI) have increasingly become critical to the success of the firm and the personal development of individuals, especially those in top-level positions in the business environment today, where business is becoming more complex and dynamic. African executives, just like their counterparts in the rest of the world, are increasingly being required to steer through various different issues such as talent preservation and innovation, stakeholder involvement, and transformational change. Coaching has emerged as a key developmental tool, with Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)-based coaching standing

out for its emphasis on internal psychological processes, behavioral flexibility, and communication excellence (Zainal et al., 2025; Passmore & Rowson, 2019).

Though the interest in NLP as a coaching methodology is on the rise, the empirical evidence that can be presented in terms of the psychological effects of this approach, especially in African contexts, has not been explored yet. Most of the literature is theoretical or anecdotal, and there is little rigorous research examining the effects of NLP-based coaching within the field of emotional intelligence or development when it comes to executive populations across the African continent (Halliwell et al., 2021; Rickard et al., 2024).

There is an ever-tightening expectation that African executives should not only lead their teams outside their local settings, but also lead in cross-cultural leadership and communicate with global stakeholders. Emotional intelligence and transformative leadership skills are not only preferred, but they are also necessary in creating a competitive and inclusive global development and international leadership (Munir et al., 2023). It is thus imperative to develop emotionally intelligent and adaptive leadership in the African context, not only to achieve success in organizations, but in order to be successful as a nation and to advance the continent.

The possibilities of NLP-based coaching to make an effective contribution to executive development in Africa cannot be discussed without empirical validation. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effect of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)-based coaching on emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership development among African Managers using qualitative methods. This will help to identify the major psychological processes and experiences mediating between the NLP-based coaching and leadership development. The results of this study could offer unique insights to human resource leaders, executive coaches, and leadership trainers who are working in Africa.

## **2. Literature Review**

Neuro -Linguistic Programming (NLP), Emotional Intelligence (EI), and Leadership Development.

This research is theoretically anchored on the convergence of the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), the Emotional Intelligence (EI), and the development of leadership theories. NLP is a psychological methodology that discusses the relationship between psychological processes, words and behavioural patterns (Bandler and Grinder, 1970s, as cited in Nompo et al., 2021). It is based on the concept that a profound change in personal and behaviour may be induced by the change of internal representations and cognition maps. The basic methods of NLP, which include reframing, anchoring, and meta-model questions, are meant to increase self-awareness, emotional control, and communicative effectiveness (Passmore and Rowson, 2019; Zainal et al., 2025).

Emotional Intelligence (EI), popularised by Goleman (1995) is a highly important leadership competency, which entails self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. EI, in turn, is not only beneficial in such a complex and in most cases high-stakes environment of African executives, but indispensable in navigating socio-cultural complexities, limited resources and stakeholder management (Mbokota and Myres, 2024; Galperin and Scheepers, 2025). The evidence is empirical as the high EI is associated with better team performance, conflict management, and ethical decision-making (Urenna & Uzoma, 2025; Sharma, 2024).

It is not hard to see that the NLP based coaching can be adopted into the realm of leadership development, because the two are now looking to achieve transformational growth initiated on the inside. The Transformational, Servant, and Authentic Leadership leadership approaches focus on self-awareness, empathy, and relational transparency skills that represent the key ingredients of EI and are the targets of NLP treatments (Goleman and Cherniss, 2024; Luthans et al., 2024). NLP offers the practicality of deprogramming the limiting beliefs and functionalizing the cognitive-emotional instructions, which relieve the psychological changes that are necessary in these leadership styles (Salamun and Masrur, 2024).

#### Positioning of the Study and Research Gap.

Although there is evidence in accumulating knowledge on worldwide studies indicating that NLP-founded coaching techniques could help in improving EI and leadership behaviours (e.g., Aguilar-Ferrandiz et al., 2024; King et al., 2023), there is a major gap between the empirical evidence and the African context. The vast majority of research is put in the Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) settings, and its results might not directly apply to the specific socio-cultural, economic and hierarchical environment of African organisations (Mbokota and Myres, 2024; Zainal et al., 2025). The available literature on African leadership frequently dwells upon theoretical philosophies like Ubuntu or transformational leadership without explaining the psychological processes in which the coach intervention like NLP works (Kamunya and Nzulwa, 2020).

This paper occupies itself to fill this gap. It goes beyond anecdotal data and empirically examines the lived experience of African executives and the particular psychological mechanisms of augmented self-awareness, a tight control of emotions, and adaptive communication through which NLP-based coaching has an effect on EI and leadership growth.

#### Research Questions

Given the qualitative nature of this study and the identified gap, the following research questions are proposed to guide the investigation:

RQ1: What are the psychological processes and experiences through which African executives perceive NLP-based coaching to influence their emotional intelligence?

RQ2: How do these psychological shifts, facilitated by NLP-based coaching, translate into perceived changes in leadership behaviors and effectiveness within African organizational contexts?

### 3. Method

This qualitative study involved In-depth Interviews with African executives who were recruited through several stages. First, the online survey was created based on Google Forms, which is commonly accessible and available to a potentially large number of people and could be considered user-friendly and fit to obtain the quantitative data of a geographically dispersed sample of African executives (Subaveerapandiyan & Ugwulebo, 2024). The participants to recruit were selected using a purposive and stratified sampling method and will target executives in the designated industries who fit the inclusion criteria. The invitation to participate was placed within a professional network and organization contacts, coaching forums, and social networks that executives usually attend (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). The following aspects were explained in the invitation message: the purpose of the study, the procedures that will be adopted in the study, assurances on confidentiality, the voluntary nature of the study, and the people interested in participating.

The respondents who opt to participate answered the questionnaire captured on the Google Form by responding to the survey questions and entering their email addresses voluntarily before the end of the form. Email addresses of the respondents were collected only to ensure that the participants are interested and want to be contacted in the future and help in arranging meetings with those who want to participate in the qualitative part of the study, where the selected volunteers were invited to take part in semi-structured interviews or focus groups (Sharma et al., 2024). After surveying, the emailed contacts will be screened, and those who have shown interest will be purposively selected to form a heterogeneous group appropriate to the qualitative collection of data. Executives were approached through email by the selected ones, who would be invited to either a video or in-person interview or focus group to participate electronically or physically, depending on availability and preference.

Data was analysed using NVivo. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews, which is flexible and rigorous but provides a means of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data (Lochmiller, 2021).

#### Ethical considerations

All study subjects were asked to sign informed consents. The participants were assured that the study was voluntary. The study ensured confidentiality, Confidentiality of the participants involved and protect their data through the anonymity of the survey answers as well as the contact details will be observed. Basically, clear consent procedures were established before the qualitative data collection so as to ascertain that there is informed and voluntary participation. In analysis and reporting, the data was anonymized to make sure that individual participants cannot be identified in any of the findings published (Hoft, 2021). Electronic data and all the physical records was stored in locked storage with password protection.

#### **4. Result and Discussion**

The research team recruited 38 volunteers with initial expression expressed by the giving of email addresses that showed their interest in the further information. Only 21 participants-maintained commitment and availability, making the final interview group. The purposive interview sample was chosen among the overall sample of 394 survey respondents and reflected several industry sectors, such as public/government, private, NGO/not-for-profit, and academia, which were relevant to the African context of the study in terms of including executive leadership (Mbokota & Myres, 2024). The interviews clarified psychological mechanisms and experiences of NLP based coaching, touching on its repercussions to emotional intelligence (EI) and becoming a leader. Four themes were identified through thematic analysis, and they included increased self-realisation, better emotional management, altered communication and interpersonal relationships, and enabled transformational leadership practices.

#### Enhanced Self-Awareness

This theme aligns with the study's objective to explore the psychological processes mediating the impact of NLP-based coaching on emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership development. The reaction of participants was always that they felt like they learned deep information about their inner emotional reactions, mental thinking patterns, behavioral triggers, and changes within their bodies as they were guided through NLP learnings, i.e., meta-model questioning, representational systems, and submodality explorations. In the literature, these kinds of techniques have been documented in terms of modeling subjective experiences in order to enhance the process of personal change (Zainal et al., 2025; Passmore & Rowson, 2019).

Increased self-awareness was viewed as an underlying mental action, which allows executives to discover their limiting beliefs and reframe them, thus creating a positive change in their emotional self-appraisal, which is a fundamental aspect of EI (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024; Boughattas et al., 2022). This enhanced self-awareness was especially pertinent within the African executive environment, where leaders tend to be faced with complicated socio-cultural conditions and high-stress decision-making contexts (Mbokota & Myres, 2024).

The answers of the respondents regarding their experience of NLP-based coaching presented clearly show the way it provoked changes in their own self-knowledge. Resp. 5 articulated the process clearly: "Through the NLP sessions, I learned to identify my default emotional responses in high-pressure situations. It was like shining a light on blind spots I did not know existed, helping me understand why I reacted certain ways and how to shift that for better outcomes." The feeling represents the success of the NLP meta-model questioning, which promotes people to question vague or limiting thinking patterns and create more luminosity, and familiarity with themselves (Passmore & Rowson, 2019). Similarly, Resp. 12 emphasized the reframing aspect of NLP: "The coaching helped me reframe my self-doubt during team conflicts. Now, I see challenges as opportunities for growth, which has made me more confident in my decisions." This agrees with the fact stated in the literature that NLP can induce flexibility in certain behavior by allowing persons to reframe their negative inner thoughts into positive ones (Zainal et al., 2025).

The same stories were expressed by other participants, which shows the contribution of certain NLR techniques to the discovery of new, hitherto unknown patterns of emotions and cognitions. Resp. 8 noted: "The representational systems exercise was eye-opening. I got to know that I was more visual in thought, therefore restricting my feedback processing. Adjusting my approach made me more aware of my emotions and how they influence my leadership style." This testimony demonstrates the usefulness of NLP due to its attention to sensory modalities in the aim of self-awareness, which encourages the growth of EI as it allows individuals to adjust their internal perception to the external world (Ghoudani et al., 2018). Resp. 16 further elaborated: "Before NLP, I was not fully aware of how my past experiences shaped my reactions to stress. The submodality work helped me pinpoint those triggers and consciously choose different responses, which has been a game-changer in boardroom discussions." In this response, the importance of the submodality techniques of NLP helps executives to deconstruct and reconstruct his/her emotional responses, which is key to efficacy in leadership within African organizational contexts that are hierarchical and collectivistic (Mbokota & Myres, 2024).

The theme of the increased level of self-awareness was also associated with the way the participants acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, which they claimed to be central to self-improvement as well as professional development. Resp. 10 stated: "NLP made me see my strengths in a new light, but also my weaknesses like how I sometimes shut down emotionally under pressure. Knowing this has helped me work on staying open and engaged." This reflection helps to endorse the opinion presented in the literature by claiming that NLP-based coaching will lead to a better knowledge of one's emotional space so that leaders can actually use leadership strengths and overcome weaknesses (Boughattas et al., 2022). Similarly, Resp. 19 shared: "The coaching sessions gave me tools to pause and reflect on my thought processes during tough decisions. I now understand my emotional triggers better, which has made me a more deliberate leader." Such a description coincides with the focus on NLP as a set of skills that promotes metacognition, which is a crucial psychological mechanism to enhance EI and leadership performance (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024).

### Better Emotional Control

They were also able to monitor and regulate their personal emotions in reaction to stress in the organisation, which is a very important aspect in EI as it enables effective leadership in high pressure African working environments experiencing political intricacies and resource limitations (Mbokota & Myres, 2024; Galperin & Scheepers, 2025). Emotional regulation has been identified as one of the main results of NLP methods, including anchoring and reframing, that allow achieving quick changes to resource states (Zainal et al., 2025; Boughattas et al., 2022). Executives reported that increased ability to allow more control over emotions, in addition to decreasing individual stress, also created more secure and trusting leadership spaces where they could better deal with the dynamic or challenging interpersonal and organizational interactions.

The answers given by the participants eloquently describe the way in which NLP-based coaching was able to help in the regulation of emotions. Resp. 3 shared a compelling example: "Before coaching, anger would overwhelm me in negotiations. NLP taught me anchoring techniques to access calm states instantly, allowing me to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively." Such a description highlights the success of the NLP technique of anchoring that relates a particular emotional state to a physical or mental signal, allowing executives to realize their strong emotions in the present tense (Passmore & Rowson, 2019). Similarly, Resp. 18 highlighted the role of reframing: "I now regulate my emotions during crises by reframing negative thoughts, which has prevented escalation and built trust with my team." This is consistent with the focus of the literature on the cognitive restructuring of NLP, based on which the leaders are able to reorganize devastating cognitive patterns to successful ones, affecting shifts in the team cohesion positively (Zainal et al., 2025).

Further considerations of the practical significance of better-regulated emotions were articulated by other participants. Resp. 6 stated: "During a recent budget crisis, I used NLP techniques to stay composed instead of panicking. This calmness helped me lead my team to find solutions without chaos." This response explains why emotional regulation as a skill developed through NLP helps leaders to stay calm under duress, which is an essential ability in African organizational culture where resources are limited; thus, it could contribute to increased stress (Mbokota & Myres, 2024). Resp. 11 echoed this sentiment: "The coaching taught me to pause and use breathing techniques paired with NLP anchors to shift my emotional state. This has made me more patient and effective in resolving conflicts with stakeholders." It is explained in this account that NLP methods would perfectly enhance mindfulness techniques, also strengthening the decision-making aspect and emotional calm (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024).

Also, respondents focused on the implications of their enhanced emotional regulation on the organization in general. Resp. 15 noted: "By managing my emotions better, I've noticed my team is less anxious. They mirror my calm, which has created a more productive work environment." This observation backs the claim in the literature that emotionally regulated leaders are associated with psychologically safe environments, which is also especially useful in African settings, where the culture of collectivism focuses on group harmony (Galperin & Scheepers, 2025). Similarly, Resp. 20 shared: "NLP helped me stay grounded during tough board meetings. Instead of getting defensive, I now listen and respond with clarity, which has earned me more respect from colleagues." This reaction supports the claim that emotional management can support interpersonal effectiveness, which can be explained by the research goal of focusing on the role of NLP in leadership behaviors (Boughattas et al., 2022).

The theme of better emotional regulation was persistently associated with particular NLP techniques, especially anchoring and reframing, which the participants attributed to the

ability to cause quick emotional changes. Resp. 9 explained: "The anchoring technique was like a switch I could flip from frustration to focus in seconds, which was invaluable during high-stakes project deadlines." This is consistent with studies that demonstrate how the structured interventions of NLP enable quick access to useful states, and thus are useful in leading leaders to positive reactions in changing circumstances (Passmore & Rowson, 2019). Resp. 17 added: "Reframing negative emotions into learning opportunities has changed how I approach setbacks. I now see them as chances to grow, which keeps me steady under pressure." This outlook is indicative of the transformational ability of NLP in terms of adaptive emotional response, which is a crucial psychological measure in terms of leadership efficacy (Zainal et al., 2025).

#### Changed Communication and Interpersonal Effectiveness

The given theme directly helps the study's purpose of examining the psychological processes through which the influence of NLP-based coaching is mediated on emotional intelligence (EI) and leader development. Just as was stated by participants, NLP practices (especially those related to representational systems, meta-model questioning, and rapport-building) helped its adherents adjust their communication styles to many different audiences at once, which is why they could be considered to improve empathy and related relational management, which were among the main aspects of EI (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024; Passmore & Rowson, 2019). These gains became paramount to the successful stakeholder involvement, conflict management, and inclusive leadership cultures in the African executive environment in which cross-cultural encounters abound and where cultural values are collectivist (Mbokota & Myres, 2024; Galperin & Scheepers, 2025).

They often narrated on how NLP skills have enabled them to understand others and adjust to their level of sensory preference, and thus improved communication. Resp. 7 explained: "NLP helped me understand others' sensory preferences in communication. Instead of assuming, I now tailor my approach, leading to fewer misunderstandings and stronger team bonds." In this account, the usefulness of representational systems in NLP, which allows leaders to recognize and adjust to the visual, auditory, or kinesthetic preferences of communication partners, is noted and thus leads to greater interpersonal clarity (Passmore & Rowson, 2019). Similarly, Resp. 14 emphasized the impact of meta-model questioning: "My interpersonal skills have sharpened; I use meta-questions to uncover underlying issues in discussions, making me more effective in motivating diverse groups." This is the answer that is supported in the literature with the claim that NLP meta-model helps learn more on the side of others, providing the understanding of common communication and promotion of empathetic and inclusive communication (Zainal et al., 2025).

Further illustrating the theme, Resp. 4 noted: "Before NLP, I struggled to connect with team members from different cultural backgrounds. The coaching taught me to mirror their language and tone, which has built trust and made collaboration smoother." This understanding highlights the rapport-building approaches employed by NLP, including, but not limited to, mirroring and matching to improve interpersonal effectiveness, especially in the African context, where cross-cultural interactions are more common (Galperin & Scheepers, 2025). Resp. 10 added: "I used to dominate meetings with my ideas, but NLP showed me how to listen actively and use pacing to align with my team's energy. Now, our discussions are more productive and inclusive." This is a narrative on the way NLP instills the concept of active listening and responsive communication patterns that are instrumental in managing relationships within hierarchical African organizations (Mbokota & Myres, 2024).

The shift in communication was also with regard to conflict resolution, which is one key leadership expertise when handling difficult situations in organizations. Resp. 9 shared: "During a heated stakeholder meeting, I used NLP's reframing to shift the conversation from blame to solutions. It completely changed the dynamic, and we reached an agreement faster." This reaction shows the effectiveness of reframing in conflict de-escalation and collaborative conversation, which seems to be a key message of the literature on NLP as a technique to help people orientate their standpoints towards collaboration (Boughattas et al., 2022). Similarly, Resp. 16 stated: "NLP gave me tools to read non-verbal cues better, so I can sense when tensions rise and address them calmly before they escalate." The skill of decoding and responding to the non-verbal message advances levels of interpersonal effectiveness, reinforcing the growth of the others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA) part of EI (Ghoudani et al., 2018).

Improved communication has been pointed out to be one of the aspects that enhanced their influence and leadership presence. Resp. 13 remarked: "The coaching helped me articulate my vision with clarity and conviction, using language that resonates with my team's values. They're now more motivated to follow my lead." That is in line with the views presented in the literature that NLP can help in improving persuasive communication, which is central to transformational leadership (Zuberbuhler et al., 2020). Resp. 20 added: "I've learned to ask powerful questions that get my team to think critically, which has made our strategy sessions more dynamic and inclusive." This pattern of effective questioning is typical of NLP, which enhances both engagement and intellectual stimulation of teams (Passmore & Rowson, 2019).

#### Fostered Transformational Leadership Behaviors

The last theme that occurred in the semi-structured interviews with 21 African executives was the concept of promoting transformational leadership behaviors, which includes inspirational motivation, vision articulation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, group goal acceptance, high performance expectation, and role modeling in an appropriate manner. This topic amounts to the purpose of the study, which is to determine the value of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)-based coaching in leadership development among African executives. The participants attributed these behavioral changes to experiential learning practices articulated in NLP, which helped reshape the behavior through reframing, anchoring, and meta-model questioning, re-pattern behavior and achieve alignment to organizational purposes. Such directions coincide with the attitudes expressed in the literature regarding the ability of NLP to facilitate a transformational shift at the deepest levels of leadership practices, allowing executives to adapt to the socio-political dynamics and collectivistic cultural patterns that are the hallmarks of the African organizational environments (Zuberbuhler et al., 2020; Turan et al., 2024; Galperin & Scheepers, 2025).

Respondents often talked about the power of the NLP methods to be able to express a powerful vision to their teams and be able to inspire them. Resp. 2 remarked: "I inspire my team by sharing a clear vision reframed through NLP, turning challenges into shared missions that everyone buys into." This example shows how the reframing method may help NLP overcome challenges and see them as opportunities to strive and be inspiringly motivated, which is the fundamental element of transformational leadership (Turan et al., 2024). Similarly, Resp. 13 shared: "NLP helped me craft a vision that resonates with my team's values, especially during resource shortages. Now, they see our goals as a collective journey, which has boosted morale." Such a reaction proves the importance of NLP in promoting vision articulation, in line with the claim made in the literature that one of the major concerns in African contexts in leadership is communicating a shared purpose effectively because the collectivist values are dominant (Mbokota Myres, 2024).

The practice of intellectual stimulation was also evident as participants told how NLP promoted innovative thinking and problem-solving. Resp. 21 concluded: "NLP has made me a better role model; I now stimulate innovative thinking by challenging assumptions, leading to more dynamic and ethical decision-making." This observation relates to the NLP meta-model questioning, which made leaders challenge the limiting beliefs and invite creativity solutions, which is essential in the resource-constrained African environment to drive innovation (Zainal et al., 2025). Resp. 6 added: "The coaching taught me to ask powerful questions that spark creativity in my team. We've developed new strategies that we would not have considered before." It is in line with the literature that NLP-based coaching can provide intellectual stimulation in the sense that it provides the leaders with the tools to question established notions (Passmore & Rowson, 2019).

The other aspect of transformational leadership, individualized consideration, was also mentioned as one of the possible outcomes of coaching based on NLP. Resp. 9 stated: "NLP helped me see each team member's unique needs. I now tailor my support to their strengths, which has built stronger trust and loyalty." This description emphasises the attention NLP places on relationship creation and identification of senses that can help leaders to deliver personal support to individuals, leading to a securing psychological environment in teams (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024). Similarly, Resp. 17 shared: "I used to treat everyone the same, but NLP showed me how to connect individually. My team feels valued, and their performance has improved significantly." This answer confirms the focus in the literature sources on personalized attention being the essential leadership behavior in horizons across Africa, where there is a strong relational administration that helps to enhance cohesiveness in a group (Galperin & Scheepers, 2025).

The role of NLP in creating goals acceptance in groups and the resulting high-performance expectancy was also the highlight of the participants. Resp. 11 noted: "Through NLP, I've learned to align my team around common goals by anchoring positive emotions to our shared objectives. It's created a sense of unity and drive." This is a representation of the anchoring in NLP that connects positive emotions to the group objectives and increases the group cohesiveness (Boughattas et al., 2022). Resp. 15 added: "NLP helped me set high-performance standards without intimidating my team. I use positive reinforcement to motivate them, and they're exceeding expectations." This falls in line with the opinion held by the literature on the capability of NLP in increasing high-level performance hopes through the acquisition of emotional intelligence, which enables effort motivation (Zuberbuhler et al., 2020).

Lastly, adequate role modeling was revealed as a notable consequence, with the participants citing improvements in how participating in NLP increased their skills on being role models. Resp. 4 stated: "The coaching made me more conscious of my actions as a leader. I now model the ethical behavior I expect, and my team mirrors it." It is a reaction to the significance of NLP in self-awareness and behavior-alignment, which plays a decisive role in ethical leadership within African organizations due to the socio-political intricacies (Chhaganlal & Mishra, 2025). Resp. 20 concluded: "NLP has transformed how I show up as a leader. I'm more authentic and consistent, which has inspired my team to take accountability." This observation substantiates the claim made in the literature that the coaching approaches whose principles are rooted in NLP promote genuine leadership, which optimally supports role modeling in high-stakes conditions (Mbokota & Myres, 2024).

Self-awareness, emotional regulation, and adaptive communication were also identified as mediating processes, as Resp. 11 claimed, "With NLP I have learned to anchor

positive feelings and align my team by focusing on common goals,” and Resp. 16 said, “Res. 16 said, the submodality work assisted in identifying those triggers.” Such results support the hypothesis of Zainal et al. (2025) that emotional competencies affect leadership behaviors and can be increased by the use of NLP methods such as anchoring, reframing, etc.

One of the differences is that communication is described in this research work as a mediating process, which is less prominent in Western-based studies (Passmore & Rowson, 2019). The quote by Resp. 7, who said NLP has helped her realize the sense preference of others during communication, shows how instrumental adaptive communication can be in African environments where communication across cultures is the norm (Galperin & Scheepers, 2025). The emphasis of the study on African executives expands this field of knowledge, showing how specific methods of the NLP communication-centered training deal with culturally and hierarchically diverse issues (Mbokota & Myres, 2024).

#### Implications

Its effectiveness in improving EI, especially when methods that develop self-awareness and emotional control are employed, is proven by the similarity with the findings of previously conducted studies, which proves the effectiveness of NLP in an African setting as well (Mbokota & Myres, 2024).

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. General Summary of Findings

The qualitative research involved the evaluation of the effectiveness of the NLP-based coaching in influencing emotional intelligence and leadership growth among African executives. The results prove that such NLP tools as reframing, anchoring, and meta-model questioning can be extremely effective stimulators of psychological change. The participants reported that there were major improvements in self-awareness, emotion management, and communication with others. These changes within the organisation directly translated into more efficient leadership behaviours such as better decision-making, increased empathy, better team levels and transformation of leadership in the organisation. The research establishes that NLP-based coaching is an effective intervention to the attainment of emotionally intelligent and adaptive leaders needed on the African business terrain that is complex.

### 5.2. Applied Conclusions and Suggestions.

The findings present apparent practical implications:

- To Human Resource Leaders and Executive Coaches: NLP-based coaching should be adopted formally by the leadership development programmes. Basic methods like reframe and anchoring should be used in training that will make the executives develop self-awareness and emotional strength.

- To Organisations and Policymakers: The strategic mandate of investing in such coaching is to have a robust leadership pipeline. To work more efficiently, these programmes are to be co-designed with the cultural experts so that the NLP principles were modified to the local contexts and philosophies, including Ubuntu with its focus on communal and individual well-being.

### 5.3. Research Limitations

This research has a number of limitations. The sample used is rather small and purposive (21 executives) and thus limits their generalisability. The qualitative design will be based on self-reports, and highly vulnerable to perception and recall bias. A longitudinal or

mixed-methods design would help fill the gaps in the research by providing a triangulated result and would identify a lasting change in behaviour in the future.

#### 5.4. Recommendations to Future Research.

Future studies should:

- Use longitudinal designs with the aim of investigating the long-term effects of NLP coaching on the efficacy of leadership and organisational performance.
- Compare the research on various African areas to examine the intercultural peculiarities of the NLP techniques use and efficiency.
- Measure the effect of particular interventions in NLP quantitatively, thereby statistically confirm the existence of the correlation between these intervention programmes and standardised measures of EI and leadership.
- Research on how NLP coaching can be used to enhance other leadership styles that are widely used in Africa, including servant and authentic leadership.

#### **Author Contribution**

For transparency, we declare the following contributions:

Atimoe Tim Itua: Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Project administration

Iornem Kohol: Validation, Writing - review & editing, Supervision

Praise R. Akogwu: Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing, Supervision

Michael A. Senkoya: Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing - original draft

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors state that the study was carried out without the presence of any commercial and financial relationships that can be regarded as the possible conflict of interest.

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