

## **INFLUENCE OF COACHING AND TRAINING ON EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVENESS: EVIDENCE FROM WATER PRODUCING FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In today's dynamic business environment, employee innovativeness has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational competitiveness and sustainability, particularly in sectors characterized by operational volatility and resource constraints. This study investigated the influence of coaching and training on employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design involving 238 employees drawn from nine registered water producing firms. Data were collected using a structured, validated questionnaire, and analysed through simple linear regression and ANOVA techniques. Findings reveal that coaching exerts a moderate to strong positive influence on employee innovativeness, accounting for 45.3% of the variance in innovative behaviour. Training, while also significant, demonstrated a lower predictive strength, explaining 32.1% of the variance ( $R = 0.567$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The study recommended that management should formally integrate coaching into onboarding and continuous development programs. This should include training supervisors and team leads to act as internal coaches, focusing on nurturing creativity, problem-solving, and proactive behaviour among staff and training interventions should move beyond routine task instruction and incorporate modules that promote creative thinking, design thinking, and adaptive problem-solving. Interactive methods such as simulations, group projects, and real-life case studies should be adopted to enhance engagement and innovative outcomes.

*Keywords:* **Employee Innovativeness, Coaching, Training, Creative Thinking, Proactiveness**

### **Introduction**

Employee Innovativeness represents the fundamental outcome whose enhancement is sought through coaching and training interventions within Water Producing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Understanding its nature, significance, and context is paramount to framing the research. At its core, Employee Innovativeness refers to the individual capacity and willingness of employees to generate, promote, and implement novel and useful ideas, products, processes, or procedures within their work roles and organizational context (Oshiobugie & Okoh, 2015). It transcends mere creativity (the generation of ideas) by encompassing the proactive championing and practical application of those ideas to effect positive change (Gabriel, Bayo & Nweto, 2025; Oshiobugie & Okoh, 2015).

Globally, employee innovativeness is recognized as the bedrock of organizational agility, competitive advantage, and long-term survival in dynamic markets. Gomathi and Deepika (2013) seminal work highlights the "Componential Theory of Creativity and Innovation," emphasizing that individual innovation requires domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and intrinsic task motivation. Foreign research consistently demonstrates that innovative employees drive process improvements, product development, cost reduction, and enhanced customer satisfaction (Nkesi, Amah & Olori, 2018). In knowledge-intensive economies, the ability to harness the innovative potential of every employee is not a luxury but a strategic imperative.

Within the Nigerian context, and particularly in Rivers State, the significance of employee innovativeness is amplified by unique socio-economic and infrastructural challenges. Nigeria's

business environment is characterized by volatility, infrastructural deficits (notably power and water supply itself), regulatory complexities, and intense competition (Adeyeye, Ogunnaike, & Oladele, 2018; Ogunnaike, Adeyeye, & Adeniji, 2015). For the Water Producing Firms operating in Rivers State, these challenges are acute. They face issues like fluctuating raw water quality (often contaminated by industrial activity and oil exploration prevalent in the Niger Delta), aging distribution infrastructure, high non-revenue water (leakage/theft), power supply inconsistencies impacting treatment and pumping, and increasing consumer demands for quality and reliability (World Bank, 2017; UNICEF, 2022 - Nigeria WASH Sector).

In this demanding environment, employee innovativeness becomes critical for survival and growth. It is not merely about radical new products but often about adaptive and incremental innovations crucial for the sector:

1. Developing more efficient water purification techniques using locally available resources, optimizing chemical dosing despite fluctuating raw water quality, creating manual backup systems for power outages, or devising novel leak detection and repair methods with limited resources (Horsfall et al., 2020; Ogunnaike et al., 2015).
2. Designing new customer engagement models (e.g., mobile payment systems adapted to local infrastructure (Akpomi & Kayii, 2021)), improving billing accuracy and dispute resolution processes, or developing community outreach programs to promote water conservation and reduce vandalism (Adeyeye et al., 2018).
3. Streamlining internal procurement procedures to overcome bureaucratic delays, implementing more effective maintenance scheduling systems, or developing new safety protocols tailored to local operational hazards (Nkesi, Amah & Olori, 2018).

While the potential value of innovativeness is high, its actualization within Nigerian organizations, including water firms, faces hurdles. Studies suggest factors like hierarchical management structures, limited resource allocation for R&D/experimentation, fear of failure, inadequate recognition systems, and skill gaps can stifle employee innovation (Ogunnaike et al., 2015; Owolabi, 2017). Furthermore, the specific pressures within the essential service sector of water production – balancing commercial viability with public health mandates and social responsibility – create a complex environment where innovative solutions are needed but not always readily fostered (World Bank, 2017).

Despite the acknowledged importance of employee innovativeness globally and its critical relevance to overcoming sector-specific challenges in Rivers State's water firms, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific drivers of this innovativeness within this context. While general HR practices are known to influence innovation, the targeted role of Coaching and Training as potential catalysts requires focused empirical investigation, particularly in this unique Nigerian industrial setting. Foreign literature strongly suggests that coaching enhances self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, and psychological safety – all key antecedents of innovativeness. Similarly, training is consistently linked to developing the domain-relevant skills and knowledge necessary for generating and implementing useful ideas (Gomathi & Deepika, 2013). However, the extent to which these relationships hold true, and the specific mechanisms through which Coaching and Training operate to foster Employee Innovativeness within the constraints and opportunities of Water Producing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, remains underexplored.

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations across the globe are under intense pressure to adapt, innovate, and stay ahead of the curve. One critical determinant of such adaptability and competitive advantage is employee innovativeness; the capacities of workers to generate, promote, and implement new and useful ideas within their organizational context (Issa & Adebola, 2014). Employee innovativeness encompasses not only the act of creative thinking but also the proactive engagement in initiating and sustaining changes that improve processes, products, and services (Gomathi & Deepika, 2013). As firms transition from traditional hierarchical structures to more dynamic and knowledge-driven operations, employee innovativeness has

emerged as a strategic imperative, especially in sectors where routine operations intersect with market volatility—such as the water production industry in Nigeria.

Employee innovativeness has become particularly relevant in industries where technological, regulatory, and environmental challenges are common. In the Nigerian context, water producing firms face myriad issues including high production costs, erratic power supply, regulatory bottlenecks, and increasing customer expectations for quality and safety (Nweze & Edame, 2016). These conditions call for a workforce that is not only technically proficient but also innovative in addressing emerging operational problems and seizing new market opportunities. Innovativeness in employees contributes significantly to operational efficiency, product improvement, customer satisfaction, and overall business resilience ((Bayo & Kayii, 2022). In the water bottling sector, for instance, innovative employees can find ways to optimize energy consumption, reduce plastic waste, or develop eco-friendly packaging alternatives—actions that are essential for sustainable growth and environmental responsibility. The concept of employee innovativeness has been extensively explored in global human resource and organizational behaviour literature. According to Oshiobugie and Okoh (2015), innovative work behaviour is a multi-stage process involving idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. This process requires cognitive flexibility, intrinsic motivation, and conducive organizational climate. In the African context, however, innovativeness is often stifled by structural limitations such as poor onboarding practices, limited capacity development, and lack of motivational incentives. In Nigeria, the situation is further exacerbated by weak organizational learning cultures and insufficient investment in employee development, making it imperative to explore mechanisms—such as coaching and training that can stimulate innovation at the employee level.

Employee innovativeness is not solely an inherent trait but can be nurtured and developed through intentional organizational practices, especially during the onboarding and continuous development stages. Coaching and training are two critical human resource interventions known to facilitate innovative behaviour among employees (Nyaribo, 2023). Coaching provides personalized support, constructive feedback, and goal-setting assistance, which can enhance employees' confidence and willingness to take initiative (Nalband & Jadhav, 2024). Training, on the other hand, equips employees with the technical and soft skills required to identify opportunities for improvement and to implement creative solutions. According to Ahmed, Sultan, Paul, and Azeem (2013), effective training programs significantly improve employee competence and innovation by expanding their knowledge base and enhancing problem-solving and coaching skills.

## Coaching

Coaching has emerged as a vital developmental tool in modern organizational practice, particularly in enhancing employee performance, engagement, and innovativeness. It involves a collaborative relationship where a more experienced or skilled individual supports another in achieving specific professional or personal goals through guidance, feedback, and motivation (Akram, Lei, and Haider, 2016). Within organizational settings, coaching—especially managerial or supervisory coaching—has been recognized as a mechanism to improve individual performance and drive innovative behaviour (Therese & Siby, 2016). By enabling employees to reflect, develop problem-solving skills, and identify growth opportunities, coaching contributes significantly to fostering creative thinking and proactiveness—key dimensions of employee innovativeness.

In the Nigerian context, coaching is still an emerging concept but has shown promising results in sectors where mentorship and leadership involvement are emphasized. For instance, Agwu, Okechukwu, and Raymond (2015) found that coaching had a significant positive effect on job performance and employee engagement in Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Company. Similar findings by Nwosu and Akanegbu (2020) revealed that coaching enhances employee confidence and supports autonomy in decision-making, thus promoting innovation. Globally, research by Hagen and Peterson (2015) shows that effective coaching leads to increased self-efficacy and creative output

in high-performance work environments. These studies affirm that coaching is not only relevant for personal development but also a strategic intervention that can shape organizational culture and nurture innovation.

Despite its benefits, coaching effectiveness is often determined by organizational commitment, coach competence, and the alignment of coaching goals with broader organizational objectives. According to Grant (2014), coaching interventions that are integrated into formal onboarding and talent development frameworks tend to yield more sustainable results, as they help newly employed staff adapt quickly while being encouraged to think innovatively. Therefore, in dynamic business environments such as Nigeria's water production sector where operational challenges are frequent—embedding coaching into employee development strategies can significantly enhance employee innovativeness, especially in terms of creative thinking and proactiveness.

### **Training**

Training is widely recognized as a cornerstone of human resource development, designed to improve employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies to perform effectively in their roles. It encompasses a range of structured activities aimed at equipping employees with the capacity to respond to job demands, adapt to technological changes, and contribute meaningfully to organizational goals (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). More than just skill acquisition, training; especially when ongoing and need-driven; has been shown to stimulate cognitive flexibility, which is essential for innovation in the workplace (Ahmed et al., 2013). Creative thinking, one of the key outcomes of innovation, often results from training programs that focus not only on technical skills but also on problem-solving, collaboration, and design thinking.

Empirical studies affirm the critical role of training in stimulating employee innovativeness. For instance, a study by Lukes and Stephan (2017) revealed that training programs with innovation-oriented content significantly influenced employees' tendency to generate new ideas and pursue improvements in European SMEs. Locally, Mbiet-Edisua and Amah (2024) found a strong relationship between structured training interventions and innovative behaviour in aviation agencies across Nigeria. They observed that employees who received regular training on problem-solving and process optimization were more likely to display creative thinking and take initiative in complex tasks. Moreover, Chaudhry, Sohail, and Riaz (2013) assert that on-the-job training fosters real-time application of skills and enhances confidence in exploring novel approaches to work tasks.

However, the effectiveness of training in promoting innovation depends heavily on the content, method, and frequency of delivery. Traditional lecture-based methods may fail to inspire innovation, whereas interactive and experiential learning techniques—such as simulations, case studies, and role-plays—tend to be more impactful (Nyaribo, 2023). In sectors like the Nigerian water production industry, which is labor-intensive and environmentally sensitive, training employees to identify operational inefficiencies and propose creative solutions can lead to significant improvements in productivity and sustainability. Furthermore, continuous professional development not only boosts employees' creative capacities but also aligns their capabilities with organizational transformation agenda.

However, growing interest in innovation research globally, there remains a dearth of empirical evidence linking coaching and training to employee innovativeness in the Nigerian context; particularly in the water production industry. Most existing studies either focus on large multinationals or are based in Western economies with well-structured talent development systems (Lukes & Stephan, 2017). This leaves a critical knowledge gap regarding how coaching and training influence innovation behaviours in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in developing economies with unique socio-economic and infrastructural constraints. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the influence of coaching and training on employee innovativeness of water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. In an increasingly competitive and innovation-driven global economy, employee innovativeness has become a critical factor for

organizational survival and growth. For firms operating in challenging sectors such as water production in Nigeria, the ability of employees to generate novel ideas, anticipate problems, and implement creative solutions is indispensable. Despite this growing recognition, many water producing firms in Rivers State continue to grapple with low levels of innovation among their workforce. Employees are often slow to adapt to changing technologies, demonstrate limited creativity in solving operational problems, and exhibit poor initiative-taking behaviour. These challenges have led to suboptimal productivity, inefficiencies in production processes, and difficulties in maintaining competitive advantage in the fast-evolving packaged water industry. One of the major contributors to this problem is the inadequacy of structured human resource development practices; particularly coaching and training. In many of these firms, onboarding processes are poorly executed, lacking personalized coaching that nurtures creativity and critical thinking. Similarly, training programs are often generic, irregular, or focused solely on routine task execution, with little emphasis on innovation-oriented skills such as problem-solving, ideation, or adaptive thinking. As a result, employees may become disengaged, underperform, or simply execute tasks without seeking improvements and ultimately stifling innovation potential within the organization.

While coaching and training are widely recognized as tools for developing employee capacity and fostering innovation, empirical research exploring their combined influence on employee innovativeness in Rivers State, particularly within the water production sector is limited. Existing studies tend to focus on large corporations or developed economies, leaving a knowledge unattended issue concerning how these interventions influence creative thinking and proactiveness among employees in small and medium-sized enterprises in developing economies like Nigeria. Given the critical importance of innovation in addressing production, distribution, and quality challenges in the water bottling industry, it becomes imperative to investigate how coaching and training can be leveraged to enhance employee innovativeness. This study, therefore, seeks to answer this question: what is the influence of coaching and training on employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of coaching and training on employee innovativeness: Evidence from Water Producing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are stated as follows:

1. To examine the influence of coaching on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. To examine the influence of training on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are to guide this study:

1. What is the influence of coaching on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of training on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant predictive influence coaching and employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant predictive influence training and employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining the nature and strength of relationships between variables. As noted by Nwankwo (2016), correlational research involves the collection of data to determine whether, and to what degree, a statistical relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. This design was considered suitable given the study's objective of assessing the influence of coaching and training (independent variables) on employee innovativeness, specifically measured through creative thinking and proactiveness. The population of the study consisted of 615 employees drawn from nine (9) registered water-producing firms operating across various locations in Rivers State, Nigeria. To ensure accurate representation of the diverse organizational structures, a sampling frame was developed using employee records provided by each firm. The study employed a stratified random sampling technique, with strata based on firm size (small, medium, and large) and geographical location (urban and semi-urban). This stratification ensured proportional representation across the different categories of firms. From the total population, a sample of 238 employees was selected using proportional allocation within each stratum to preserve representativeness. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was constructed based on previously validated scales from relevant literature on onboarding, coaching, training, and employee innovativeness. Content validity of the instrument was established through expert review by three professionals in human resource management and educational measurement. A pilot test was conducted with 30 employees from two firms not included in the main study sample. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine unclear items and improve the clarity and reliability of the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's Alpha was used. The coaching and training subscales yielded reliability coefficients of 0.72 and 0.75 respectively, while the innovativeness scale (comprising creative thinking and proactiveness items) recorded a coefficient of 0.78, all of which indicated acceptable internal consistency for social science research. Given the continuous nature of the Likert-scale data and the study's aim to determine the extent to which coaching and training predict employee innovativeness, linear regression analysis was employed as the primary statistical tool for data analysis. This approach was chosen because it allows for the examination of the unique and combined effects of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable, while controlling for multicollinearity and estimating the strength and direction of influence. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of coaching on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Simple Regression Analysis on the influence of coaching on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
1	.673 <sup>a</sup>	.453	.446	.38309	moderate/strong

a. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching

Table 1 presents the simple regression analysis on the influence of coaching on employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State. The result shows an R value of 0.673, indicating a moderate to strong positive influence between coaching and employee innovativeness. The R-Square value of 0.453 suggests that coaching accounts for approximately 45.3% of the

variation in employee innovativeness, while the Adjusted R-Square of 0.446 confirms the model's predictive strength after adjusting for the number of predictors and sample size. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.38309) indicates a moderate level of error in the prediction. This implies that while coaching significantly contributes to enhancing employee innovativeness, about 54.7% of the variance is influenced by other factors not covered in this study, such as proactiveness, organizational culture, leadership style, or individual traits.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of training on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Simple Regression Analysis on the influence of training on employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
1	.567 <sup>a</sup>	.321	.313	.42661	low to moderate

a. Predictors: (Constant), Training

Table 2 shows the simple regression analysis assessing the influence of training on employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State. The R value of 0.567 indicates a low to moderate positive influence between training and employee innovativeness. The R-Square value of 0.321 implies that training explains approximately 32.1% of the variance in employee innovativeness, while the Adjusted R-Square of 0.313 confirms that about 31.3% of the variability in innovativeness is accounted for by training after adjusting for model complexity. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.42661) reflects a moderate level of error in prediction. These results suggest that while training plays a significant role in promoting innovativeness among employees, the majority of the variance (68.7%) is influenced by other factors such as individual creativity thinking, organizational culture or leadership practices.

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant predictive influence coaching and employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Regression ANOVA on significant influence coaching and employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	9.831	1	9.831	66.987	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Significant
	Residual	11.888	237	.147			
	Total	21.719	238				

a. Dependent Variable: employee innovativeness

b. Predictors: (Constant), coaching

Table 3 presents the regression ANOVA analysis examining the significant influence of coaching on employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State. The results show that the regression model is statistically significant, with  $F(1, 237) = 66.987$ ,  $p = .000$ , which is well below the 0.05 significance threshold. This indicates that coaching has a significant predictive effect on employee innovativeness. The mean square for the regression (9.831) is substantially higher than

that of the residual (0.147), further reinforcing the strength of the model. Based on this evidence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that coaching significantly predicts employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant predictive influence training and employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Regression ANOVA on significant predictive influence training and employee innovativeness in the water producing firms in Rivers State**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	6.977	1	6.977	38.335	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Significant
	Residual	14.742	237	.182			
	Total	21.719	238				

a. Dependent Variable: employee innovativeness

b. Predictors: (Constant), training

Table 4 presents the regression ANOVA analysis on the significant predictive influence of training on employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State. The result shows a statistically significant model, with  $F(1, 237) = 38.335$ ,  $p = .000$ , indicating that training has a significant predictive effect on employee innovativeness. The p-value is well below the 0.05 threshold, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The mean square value for the regression (6.977) is considerably higher than the residual mean square (0.182), suggesting that training contributes meaningfully to the variance explained in employee innovativeness. Although the effect size is moderate compared to coaching, the result confirms that training significantly predicts employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the proposition that coaching and training significantly influence employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Finding of research question 1 revealed that coaching has a moderate to strong positive influence on employee innovativeness. This finding aligns with the regression result, which showed a statistically significant predictive effect of coaching on employee innovativeness. These results underscore the critical role that coaching plays in driving innovative behaviour among employees. This finding is consistent with Akram, Lei, and Haider (2016), who emphasized that coaching fosters innovation by establishing a collaborative relationship that enhances guidance, feedback, and reflection. Coaching supports employee learning and confidence—two essential elements in nurturing creativity and proactiveness. Therese and Siby (2016) also reinforced the relevance of coaching in improving individual performance and cultivating innovative behaviour, especially when embedded within supervisory and leadership functions. In the Nigerian context, Agwu, Okechukwu, and Raymond (2015) found that coaching significantly improves employee engagement and performance, which are precursors to innovation. Similarly, Nwosu and Akanegbu (2020) observed that coaching enhances employees' decision-making autonomy, leading to increased confidence in generating and implementing new ideas. These studies confirm the present findings, demonstrating that coaching is not merely a developmental tool but a strategic resource for promoting innovation in organizations.

Finding of Research Question 2 revealed that training has a low to moderate positive influence on employee innovativeness. Although the magnitude of influence was slightly lower than coaching, the regression analysis showed that training had a statistically significant predictive effect on

employee innovativeness. This is consistent with Armstrong and Taylor (2020), who described training as a foundational aspect of human resource development that enhances employees' capabilities to meet organizational goals. The training programs that focus on creative problem-solving, adaptability, and teamwork tend to foster innovative behaviour among employees. Ahmed et al. (2013) further supported this view by stating that continuous and need-driven training can improve cognitive flexibility, which is crucial for innovation. The study by Lukes and Stephan (2017) similarly demonstrated that innovation-oriented training significantly improved the capacity of European SME employees to think creatively and implement improvements in work processes. In Nigeria, Mbiet-Edisua and Amah (2024) found that structured training programs enhanced innovative behaviour in aviation agencies, showing that local contexts also respond well to skill-based innovation development. Moreover, Chaudhry, Sohail, and Riaz (2013) found that on-the-job training not only improves skill acquisition but also promotes real-time application of creative strategies. This is particularly relevant for technical industries such as water production, where innovative thinking can be applied to product design, process optimization, and quality control. Thus, the study confirms that while training positively contributes to employee innovativeness, its impact may be enhanced when it is continuous, practically oriented, and aligned with innovation goals

### Conclusion

This study examined the influence of coaching and training on employee innovativeness in water producing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that coaching has a moderate to strong positive and statistically significant influence on employee innovativeness, particularly in enhancing creative thinking and proactiveness. Training also showed a low to moderate but significant influence on innovativeness, indicating that while both variables are important, coaching appears to be a stronger predictor. These results affirm the value of structured developmental interventions in cultivating innovative behaviour among employees, which is vital for competitiveness and sustainability in the water production sector.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Management should formally integrate coaching into onboarding and continuous development programs. This should include training supervisors and team leads to act as internal coaches, focusing on nurturing creativity, problem-solving, and proactive behaviour among staff.
2. Training interventions should move beyond routine task instruction and incorporate modules that promote creative thinking, design thinking, and adaptive problem-solving. Interactive methods such as simulations, group projects, and real-life case studies should be adopted to enhance engagement and innovative outcomes

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