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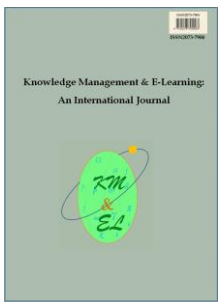

Knowledge Management & E-Learning: An International Journal (KM&EL)
ISSN 2073-7904

Recommended citation:
Solthong, S., Parisot, X., & Ribiere, V. (2024). How coaching interventions impact learning organization culture, knowledge and customer experience performances: A case study comparing Thai car dealers from one US company. *Knowledge Management & E-Learning, 16*(4), 754–790. https://doi.org/10.34105/j.kmel.2024.16.035

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How coaching interventions impact learning organization culture, knowledge and customer experience performances: A case study comparing Thai car dealers from one US company

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Abstract: Coaching has become an increasingly popular intervention tool for improving organizational performance. Among various benefits, coaching interventions can assist organizations with becoming learning organizations by developing a knowledge-sharing culture and strengthening knowledge flows. Nevertheless, there is insufficient empirical evidence supporting the positive impact of coaching interventions on both learning organization culture as defined in Watkins and Marsick's model (1993) and knowledge and customer experience performances. We build upon Joo's (2005) foundational framework for effective executive coaching by integrating the organizational learning framework. This integration aligns with the knowledge-based perspective of firms. Our enhanced research model aims to delve deeper into the effects of coaching interventions on knowledge performance and overall customer experience. The proposed model was tested on a sample of seven car dealers of a well-known US automotive company based in Thailand. Four car dealers had received coaching interventions while three had not (non-coached dealers). A total of 300 employees participated. The results demonstrate a significant positive impact of coaching interventions on all seven dimensions of learning organization culture, as well as on customer experience performance. Additionally, learning organization culture was found to partially mediate the impact of coaching interventions on customer experience performance. This study's dual academic contributions include enriching Joo's (2005) framework by incorporating the learning organization model and empirically examining and underscoring the positive influence of coaching interventions on learning organizations. In

practical terms, coaching interventions can bolster the competitiveness of Thai car dealers through improvements in organizational performance, organizational learning, customer satisfaction, and knowledge efficiency.

Keywords: Coaching interventions; Learning organization culture; Customer experience performance; Automotive industry; DLOQ

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1. Introduction

According to Dr Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars, automotive companies are transitioning from being car manufacturers to networked mobility providers, with an increased focus on customer experience (CX) and employee engagement (Scherpen et al., 2018). To remain globally competitive, companies are implementing customer experience management (CEM) strategies to counteract the challenges of digitalization and changing customer behaviours. One such strategy is the CEM program, which was launched by a US automotive company (UAC) in 2011 in the USA and in 2014 in Thailand to improve CX among its car dealers through coaching interventions (CIs). This strategic choice aims to maintain global competitiveness through learning organization (LO) development (Liu & Zhao, 2006) at the retail level of the supply chain.

The Thai automotive industry is the largest in Southeast Asia (Maikaew, 2019), which makes it an attractive location for researchers. This study focuses on the performance of car dealers in Thailand for one US automotive company, UAC. UAC's supply chain, particularly its car dealerships, is primarily composed of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), mostly owned by local people (Thailand Automotive Institute, 2012). To become LOs, these SMEs depend heavily on the car companies' support through car dealership agreements. UAC implements various programs, including the customer experience management (CEM) program, which uses CIs to improve customer experience performance (CXP) and organizational development for its car dealers.

From an academic perspective, although the literature has demonstrated the positive impact of CIs on organizational performance, including leadership, talent development, employee competencies, and employee engagement (Crabb, 2011), scepticism regarding the effectiveness of coaching remains (Bono et al., 2009; Bozer & Sarros, 2012: Utrilla et al., 2015). Moreover, only a handful of academic studies have applied the LO perspective in the automotive industry (Agrawal & Yadav, 2018; Bierema & Berdish, 1999; West & Burnes, 2000), and none have focused on car dealers or included CIs in Thailand (Pichetsiraprapa et al., 2016; Sudharatna, 2015). Furthermore, a lack of evidence-based assessments of its impact on car dealers in Thailand limits the ability of Human Resources (HR) professionals to convince their leaders and stakeholders to implement it (Walker-Fraser, 2011). The weak voluntary participation of UAC's Thai car dealers in the CEM program indicates the importance of addressing this scepticism. Therefore, this study aims to close this gap by further demonstrating the integration of organizational learning and the coaching literature in Human Resource Development by measuring the impact of CIs on both the learning organization culture (LOC) and CXP of UAC's Thai car dealers. Consequently, our main research question is:

> ***RQ:*** To what extent do coaching interventions have an impact on the learning organization culture and knowledge and customer experience performances in the case of seven US car dealers based in Thailand?

From a practical perspective, this study's findings provide insights into the impact of CIs on car dealers in Thailand and their potential to become LOs. The results of this study may help HR professionals and organizational leaders understand the potential benefits of coaching interventions and encourage their implementation. Finally, this study also adds to the literature on the available metrics measuring the impact of CIs, which do not currently measure the impact of CIs on either the LOC or CXP. With regard to academics, this study contributes further evidence of the influence of coaching interventions on developing a learning organization culture.

This article first presents the concepts mobilized through the literature review. The lack of connection between these concepts leads to the identification of the research gap and the formulation of our conceptual framework and model. The purpose of the study is then justified and followed by the presentation of the methodological tools applied and the results. After the discussion of these results, the article ends with the limitations and the conclusions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition of coaching

Coaching was first referenced in the context of the workplace in 1937 (Grant, 2001). In management sciences, coaching was considered a separate discipline in the early 1980s (Passmore & Theeboom, 2016). However, academic research on coaching is still at an early stage. The first significant academic study on coaching was published in 2001 (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Blackman et al. (2016) state that "*until recently, there has been little published systematic empirical research into business coaching*". Moreover, most empirical research studies are conducted by postgraduate students (Passmore & Gibbes, 2007) and by a small number of active

researchers (Schutte & Steyn, 2015). As a result, the coaching discipline is growing very slowly in the academic world (Schutte & Steyn, 2015).

A large variety of activities are involved in coaching: teaching, counselling, mentoring, consulting, team building, etc. (Bond & Seneque, 2013; Passmore & Lai, 2019). This situation has led to the coexistence of multiple definitions. Moreover, the terms "*mentoring*" and "*coaching*" are often used interchangeably in the literature. However, they are not synonymous (Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Salter & Gannon, 2015). The establishment of one common conceptualization is still a challenging academic task (Passmore & Lai, 2019). As Passmore and Lai (2019) mention, "*while there has been broad agreement over these years, the focus and emphasis has varied reflecting the orientation and focus of different writers (e.g., Whitmore, 1992; Grant & Palmer, 2002; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011)*". In this context, the International Coaching Federation (ICF), the oldest professional coaching association, proposed the following definition: "*partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires the client to maximize their personal and professional potential*" (ICF, 2015). Since the ICF is recognized as the largest global coaching institute (57,563 members in 170 countries in February 2023) (ICF, 2023), its "*coaching*" definition is therefore commonly used among professional coaches worldwide. On the contrary, mentoring is a relationship that is "*focused on providing guidance, support, and development within the career context*" (Ellinger, 2015, p. 261). However, the debate about the similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring practices persists (Garvey et al., 2021; Kamarudin et al., 2020). Though the ICF stresses, to all their certified coaches, the importance of differentiating its "*coaching*" practices from other similar types of practices, such as mentoring, consulting, counselling, etc., in actual practice, it is very difficult for the coaches to conduct their coaching practices in accordance with the definition of each type.

In summary, "*coaching is typically considered a process or set of behaviors that enable individuals to learn and develop as well as to improve their skills and enhance their performance*" (Ellinger & Kim, 2014). At the individual level, coaching can enhance personal effectiveness, personal development, or personal growth (Ellinger et al., 2011). In an organizational context, coaching and mentoring are both important sources of learning and development. They can be delivered by managers, other experienced colleagues, and external experts. Serrat (2017) stated that "*high-quality coaching and mentoring can help reflective practices flourish*".

2.2. Coaching interventions (CIs)

Coaching is applied as one of the various organizational intervention tools to develop leadership and future talents (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013), to improve employee skills and competencies (Medland & Stern, 2009) and their well-being (Cartwright, 2022; Duijts et al., 2008; Grant et al., 2009), to enhance operational processes and organizational outcomes (Jones et al., 2016; Utrilla et., 2015), to reinforce the performance of both executives and employees (Bond & Seneque, 2013; Liske & Holladay, 2016; Olivero et al., 1997; Theeboom et al., 2014), and to generate LOC (Ladyshewsky & Taplin, 2018). Coaching can support learning at various levels: individual, team and organizational (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Following Senge's (1990) seminal perspective on learning organizations (LO), CIs have become a significant part of the organizational learning efforts to change and improve performance (Bond & Seneque, 2013; Crabb, 2011).

The demand of leaders for coaching their employees is increasing as the benefits of coaching become more evident (Milner et al., 2018). Coaching is also widely used in many different contexts such as line managers who coach their teams and internal and external professional coaches, who both help fuel the growth of coaching practices within organizations (Cox et al., 2010). An increasing number of articles have confirmed the positive correlation between managerial coaching and employees' individual performance, employee satisfaction, and ultimately the achievement of organizational goals (Kim, 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2014; Milner et al., 2018; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015). Therefore, companies' leaders expect a continuously increasing number of their managers to coach their employees (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). However, CIs involve skills that cannot be taken for granted and must be consciously developed in the organization by external coaches (Serrat, 2017). Moreover, managerial coaching skills can be difficult for managers to acquire if they have not been coached before (Ladyshewsky, 2010). Therefore, most organizations rely on external coaches to train their executives (McCarthy & Milner, 2013).

Business coaching (Blackman et al., 2016) and team coaching (Zink, 2023) conducted by external coaches are also commonly used for both SMEs (Ton et al., 2023) and family businesses (Shams & Lanes, 2020). Shams and Lanes (2020) also found that team coaching is the most effective intervention for improving the business functions in a family business.

However, in this context, the scepticism about CIs' return on investment (ROI) remains (Bower, 2012; De Meuse et al., 2009; Theeboom et al., 2014), despite the development of several formulas proving their effectiveness in different contexts (Dembkowski & Eldridge, 2003; Phillips, 2007; Schlosser et al., 2007, Ton et al., 2023). The scepticism of organizational leaders has multiple root causes such as budget constraints or perceived costs (Kumpikaite, 2008), leadership's role in the knowledge management (KM) process (Sudharatna, 2015), leadership commitment (Sudharatna & Li, 2004), employees' organizational commitment (Atak & Erturgut, 2010), and employees' readiness (Shirazi et al., 2011). Therefore, there is still a need to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of CIs to improve organizational performance. Despite these remaining doubts, the number of professional coaches in Thailand has been increasing during the past decade (ICF, 2023).

2.3. Learning organization (LO)

Evolving from organizational learning (OL), the LO concept quickly gained interest in the fields of human resources and organizational development (Marquardt, 2002, 2011; Kumpikaite, 2008; Watkins & Kim, 2018; Watkins & O'Neil, 2013). Senge (1990) was the first to coin the term "LO" as "*where people continually expand their capacity to generate the results, they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together*" (Senge, 2006). His perspective on LO integrates five organizational areas: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning (Senge, 1990). These areas are crucial to building up the core learning capabilities at the team and organizational levels (Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

Expanding beyond this seminal normative perspective developed by several experts (e.g., Garvin, 1993; Goh, 2001; Pedler et al., 1989; Senge, 1990) and proposing various sets of criteria to reach LO status, Watkins and Marsick (1993) adopted a developmental perspective to propose a ground-breaking model (Song et al., 2009). They considered that

the organization is always in a state of becoming a LO (DiBella, 1995) and hypothesized that the less that learning is structured, the better it is for the organization to improve its learning culture (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Although their perspective is quite different from that of their peers, they developed it by considering multiple contemporary viewpoints (Sidani & Reese, 2018).

Watkins and Marsick (1993) defined the LO as:

> *"…one that learns continuously and transforms itself. Learning takes place in individuals, teams, organizations and even the communities with which the organization interacts. Learning is a continuous, strategically used process, integrated with and running parallel to work. Learning results in changes in knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors. Learning also enhances the organizational capacity for innovation and growth. The learning organization has embedded systems to capture and share learning."*

Watkins and Marsick's (1993) initial model of the LO comprises three critical elements: "*1) system-level, continuous learning; 2) that is created in order to [generate] and manage knowledge outcomes; 3) which leads to the improvement of organizational performance, and ultimately its value as measured through both financial assets and non-financial intellectual capital*" (Marsick & Watkins, 1999). This model led to the development of the framework which is the basis for the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) as shown in Fig. 1. This framework includes the two main objectives recurrently associated with the development of LO in the literature: 1) improving organizational performance and 2) helping organizations remain competitive (Ellinger et al., 2002; Farrukh & Waheed, 2015; Jashapara, 2003; Tsang, 1997; Weldy, 2009). The seven dimensions of the LO are grouped under two critical levels: people and structure. Yang et al. (2004) found that the structural level affects knowledge gain and financial performance more significantly than individual changes.

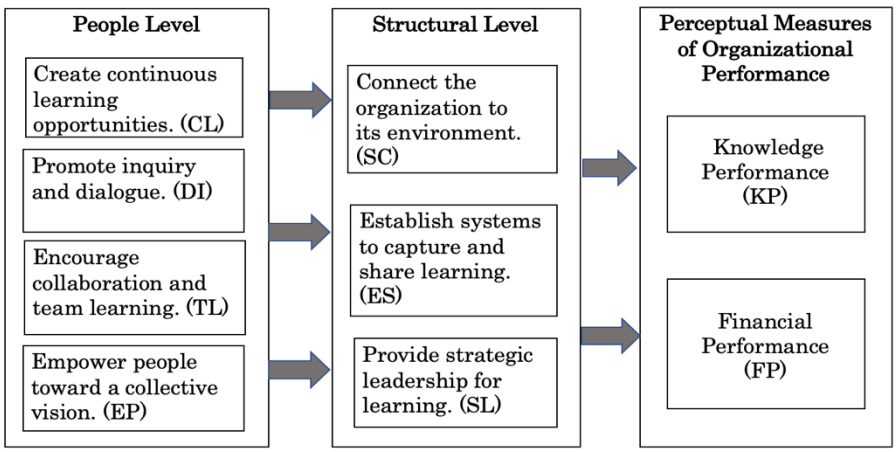

Fig. 1. The seven dimensions of the learning organization and organizational performance

Despite the popularity of LO increasing globally during the past few decades, Mak and Hong (2020) raised various issues concerning the challenges involved with its practicability and implementation, including the direct application of these universal

existing LO models in different contexts. Moreover, traditional LO models mostly focus on internal knowledge sharing, knowledge capturing and knowledge retention, and thus, the impact of the external stakeholders and the embedded contexts tend to be overlooked (Becker, 2018). Therefore, it is proposed that the future direction of the next generation of LO should be to adopt contextualized and multi-stakeholder perspectives (Hong & Mark, 2019; Örtenblad, 2019). LOs must continuously learn and collaborate with multiple stakeholders, especially their customers, in order to create sustainable value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders (Pera et al., 2016). Moreover, each LO requires differentiated prescriptions and should be adapted to different contexts in order to realize greater success (Örtenblad, 2019). For example, it might be suitable for LOs such as ambidextrous organizations to use action learning as an intervention tool (Zabiegalski & Marquardt, 2022). Similarly, coaching has been utilized at UAC car dealers globally since 2011 as an intervention tool to improve CXP.

2.4. Differences between learning organization (LO) and organizational learning (OL)

Although the concepts of LO and OL are related, they are nevertheless distinct. During the 1980s and 90s, these two terms were frequently used interchangeably in the literature (Goh, 2001), which generated some confusion as to their scope (Stewart, 2001). More recent articles have aimed at clarifying and distinguishing the meanings of both concepts, but their distinctions are conceptually rather than empirically based (Örtenblad, 2001). Fellow professionals in the area of organization development have been identifying ways to better adapt academic definitions and to facilitate the application of academic studies by corporate practitioners (DiBella, 1995; Garvin, 1993; Goh, 2001; Örtenblad, 2001; Pedler et al., 1989; Senge, 1990; Tsang, 1997; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Goh (2001) differentiates these two terms by viewing OL from a capability perspective because the learning process itself already exists in the organization. By contrast, the LO is viewed from a normative perspective because it is a particular form of organization. Each organization has certain strengths and weaknesses that it can draw on to fulfil this ideal form in order to adapt and change in a competitive environment.

In general terms, the OL literature focuses on an understanding of the processes involved in learning within organizations, without attempting to change those processes, while the LO literature concentrates on searching for tools and action-oriented initiatives that can help improve the quality of the learning process itself (Easterby-Smith, 1997). However, in the early 2000s, the debate about the distinction between the LO and the OL became less significant. Researchers and practitioners studying learning in organizations appeared to be discussing the same phenomenon in different ways. Instead of a conscious and explicit debate, this generated confusion, which was only resolved as scholars began to make sense of the differences between communities of researchers and practitioners. For example, the first international conference on OL did not distinguish between the OL and the LO. However, the papers and presentations were quite diverse, and it soon became clear that while the community of practitioners was using the term in a prescriptive way, the community of academics was using the term in a descriptive way (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000). Nevertheless, Marsick and Watkins (2003) suggest that the various concepts of OL have influenced the conceptual development of LO and define an LO as "*a living organism that uses learning to improve organizational performance*" (Kim et al., 2015). It is also notable that most scholars consider OL to be a process, while practitioners and consultants tend to view the LO as an entity or a form. The following are the most common themes

used to distinguish between LO and OL in the existing literature. First, the LO is an ideal form of organization where learning is maximized. Second, OL is an activity or process of learning in the organization. Third, the LO requires effort to implement while OL exists without any effort.

2.5. Dimensions of the learning organization questionnaire (DLOQ)

Since LOs have been described in various ways, the development of diagnostic tools and measurement scales to assess LO progress has been challenging (Moilanen, 2001). Before the DLOQ was published by Watkins and Marsick in 1997 (Kim et al., 2015), there was a lack of empirically validated practical tools (Song et al., 2009). The fast adoption and broad application of the DLOQ changed this situation. Over the years, the frequent use of the DLOQ continually reinforced its validity, and it has been applied in a wide variety of countries and industries (Marsick, 2013). In academic research, the DLOQ "*plays a pivotal role as an antecedent for many dependent variables*" (Song et al., 2009) and is a reference tool to measure the progress of LOs. The DLOQ instrument is composed of seven dimensions as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
The seven dimensions of the DLOQ instrument

Action imperatives (dimensions)	Definition
Create continuous learning opportunities (CL)	Learning is designed into work so that people can learn on the job; opportunities are provided for ongoing education and growth.
Promote dialogue inquiry (DI)	People gain productive reasoning skills to express views and the capacity to listen and inquire into the views of others; the culture is changed to support questioning, feedback, and experimentation.
Encourage team learning and collaboration (TL)	Work is designed to encourage groups to access different modes of thinking; groups are expected to learn and work together; collaboration is valued by the culture and rewarded.
Create embedded systems to capture and share learning (ES)	Both high- and low-technology systems to share learning are created and integrated with work; access is provided, and systems are maintained
Empower people toward a collective vision (EP)	People are involved in setting, owning, and implementing a joint vision; responsibility is distributed close to decision-making so that people are motivated to learn what they are held accountable to do.
Create a system connection between the organization and environment (SC)	People are helped to see the effect of their work on the entire enterprise; people scan the environment and use information to adjust work practices; the organization is linked to its communities.
Provide strategic leadership for learning (SL)	Leaders model, champion, and support learning; leadership uses learning strategically for business results.

Few studies have investigated the successful transitions to an LOC which led to organizational performance improvement using this most recent model (Weldy & Gillis, 2010). However, empirical evidence shows that the LOC has a positive impact on KP (Kumar & Idris, 2006; Zhang et al., 2004). Marsick and Watkins (2003) define six areas for KP: customer satisfaction, new suggestions implemented, new products and services, percentage of skilled workers, percentage of total spending on information technology, and number of employees learning new skills. Other knowledge-related performance indicators studied include knowledge creation (Song, 2008), tacit knowledge transfer (Hernandez, 2003), and innovation (Ismail, 2005; Sta Maria & Watkins, 2003). KP has also been empirically found to correlate with financial performance (Banker et al., 2000; King &

Zeithaml, 2003; McHargue, 2000) and to mediate the relationship between the LOC and financial performance (Kim et al., 2017). Several studies using hard measures of financial performance (Davis & Daley, 2008; Ellinger et al., 2002) also confirm the positive correlation between LOC and higher performance (Watkins & Kim, 2018).

In addition, LOC also has a positive and direct impact on various types of non-financial performance, such as employee performance, customer experience performance and supplier performance (Škerlavaj et al., 2007), as well as work engagement and employee resilience (Malik & Garg, 2020). The positive influence of LOC on customer satisfaction has already been described in several empirical studies on service organizations, including automobile repair services (Islam et al., 2014; Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2013). Maleki (2016) also confirms the positive relationship between LOC and customer satisfaction in the insurance industry. The adaptations of the DLOQ in the aforementioned empirical studies show that it is possible to integrate CIs and customer experience in the same framework.

2.6. Conceptual integration of organizational learning (OL) and coaching / mentoring

Templeton et al. (2002) studied 78 explicit definitions of OL which they synthesized into the following definition "*organizational learning is the set of actions (knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memory) within the organization that intentionally and unintentionally influence positive organizational change*". Easterby-Smith (1997) also reviewed the OL literature from six disciplinary perspectives: 1) psychology and organization development (OD), 2) management science, 3) strategy, 4) production management, 5) sociology, and 6) cultural anthropology. Each perspective is based on its own ontology and methodology, and so the ways that scholars study these problems and provide their distinctive contributions to each scenario often lead to minimal overlap between perspectives.

Previous studies suggested a strong integration between OL and coaching/mentoring in the context of OD and human resource development (HRD). This integration aims to facilitate organizational changes by developing the workforce and enhancing organizational learning capabilities (Garvey et al., 2021; Khakwani et al., 2012; Law, 2013). A study by Beattie et al. (2014) discovered that coaching can effectively support OL by facilitating employees' learning agility. Furthermore, coaching enhances organizational performance by promoting employee engagement and well-being (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Organizations fostering a coaching culture are more likely to cultivate a robust learning culture (Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh, 2014). As Hollywood et al. (2016) state "*both mentoring and coaching are a means to support workers' knowledge acquisition and organizational learning… [and] can promote changes in thinking about and doing one's job and developing an innovative mindset*".

While coaching and mentoring serve as tools for professional and organizational development, many people often confuse these practices and mistakenly perceive them as the same (Khakwani et al., 2012). The primary distinction between coaching and mentoring lies in the development of the action plan, which varies between the coach and the mentor (Gilley & Boughton, 1995). In mentoring relationships, the mentor typically assumes responsibility for action plan development, whereas in coaching, the coachees take the lead in formulating their own action plans (Khakwani et al., 2012). Aldeman (2011) emphasizes coaching as a means to facilitate learning by fostering active engagement that encourages

individuals to think independently and develop solutions for workplace issues and challenges. Coaching encourages new thinking which in turn leads to a continuous improvement in change processes (Prydale, 2011). This coaching approach fosters a heightened sense of commitment and accountability for enhancing their own performance and productivity (Gilley & Boughton, 1995). Kim et al. (2016) also found that the leader's coaching has a direct impact on employees' organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). At the same time, the strengthening of OCB will also improve the organizational performance regarding strategic performance, team collaboration and knowledge management (Haass et al., 2023).

On the other hand, mentoring is often focused on one-to-one development using experiential learning as the key mechanism for the development process (Stokes et al., (2021). Leyer et al., (2023) mentioned that "*in experiential learning, learners shape and make explicit their knowledge within a social environment*" (Centobelli & Cerchione, 2023; Chu et al., 2011; Gherardi et al., 1998; Lave, 1988; Wenger, 1998). They also suggested that a higher social exchange leads to better learning results. Consequently, mentors place more emphasis on the quality of the relationship, rather than their process expertise. However, mentors' knowledge and experience are regarded as crucial elements in their relationship (Stokes et al., 2021).

2.7. Customer experience (CX)

The concept of customer experience (CX) originated in the mid-1980s (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). It gained more attention with the work of Pine and Gilmore (1999) and has become a major topic in the last three decades for both practitioners and scholars (Jain et al., 2017). CX is defined as "*a strategic process for creating holistic customer value, achieving differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage*" (Jain et al., 2017). CX is usually divided into five categories: product, experience, service experience, consumption experience and shopping experience (Konrad, 2019). In the past, the automobile industry was characterized by product orientation. Today, car companies focus on developing long-term relationships at all levels of the supply chain, especially retail. Automobile purchase is characterized by a large monetary volume from few customers. Therefore, a good CX is critical to reaching the goals of customer satisfaction, increasing customer loyalty, and ensuring organizational performance. Achieving such goals has recently become more challenging as customer behaviour is evolving, with consumers seeking variety and new channels for gathering information, as well as a loss of symbolic status (Konrad, 2019).

Moreover, digitalization is changing the modalities of purchase (Scherpen et al., 2018). Consequently, CX is an increasingly important strategic factor for car companies and dealers to consider for the improvement of their customer focus. Moreover, a study by Chetty et al. (2021) confirmed that the employees at contact centers are better equipped to provide efficient and effective services experience to customers with more updated training. Therefore, contact centers continued to invest in training and development. However, there was a gap, which was that they found it difficult to integrate the knowledge acquired in the training session with their organizational processes. Coaching interventions were therefore implemented at UAC globally to ensure that the staff at dealership centers/showrooms are able to apply what they have learned and take initiatives to enhance customer experience at their showrooms.

2.8. Connections between the concepts of coaching interventions (CIs), learning organization culture (LOC), and customer experience (CX) in the literature

Even though the concepts of CIs, LOC, and CX are not new, the literature review revealed a lack of articles presenting their relationships altogether. A systematic review of the literature reveals that the more concepts are combined in the searches, the fewer articles are found. None of the articles identified combines all of the concepts mobilized in the automotive industry or the car dealers (see Fig. 2). Regarding the growing importance of CIs to improve CX, this gap justifies the empirical analysis of the impact of CIs on CX in the LOC perspective.

Articles using the DLOQ to study the relationship between the LOC and CXP are scarce in the literature. Only one article mobilizing all of the keywords appears in the searches, which however, does focus on the automotive industry, as displayed in Fig. 2. Similarly, there are no articles that specifically focus on the relationship between CIs and LOC in the automotive industry. The systematic review of the literature shows a research gap concerning the connections between CIs, LOC, and CXP in the context of US-branded car dealers, especially in Thailand, and leads to the research problem of the present study to what extent do coaching interventions have an impact on the learning organization culture and knowledge and customer experience performances?

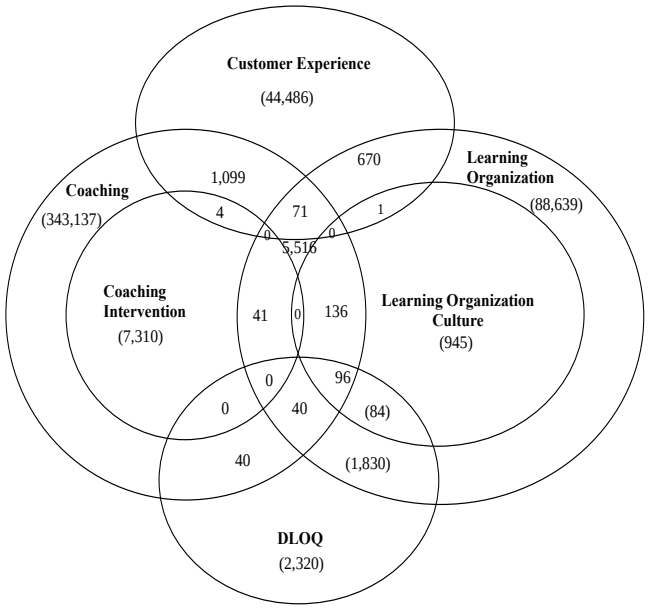

Fig. 2. Connections between the mobilized concepts in the academic literature

2.9. Framework for integrating coaching interventions (CIs), learning organization culture (LOC), knowledge performance (KP), and customer experience performance (CXP)

Lynham (2000) highlighted that the domain of theory construction in HRD is relatively new. This novelty has resulted in several gaps, including (1) the absence of a clearly defined philosophical foundation guiding theory creation, (2) the lack of thoroughly

studied and validated methods for constructing theory, and (3) an overarching deficiency in a collective understanding of the fundamental principles of theory and its formation within HRD. Notably, coaching is not immune to these challenges. Although recent years have seen some research gaps addressed with emerging theories, our literature review indicates that the field of coaching still lacks comprehensive, validated theoretical frameworks.

For this study, the conceptual framework for successful executive coaching developed by Joo (2005) is particularly relevant. This framework was significantly influenced by the one proposed by Wanberg et al. (2003). Joo's (2005) framework, as exhibited in Fig. 3. is composed of four main pillars: Antecedents, Process, Proximal Outcomes and Distal Outcomes.

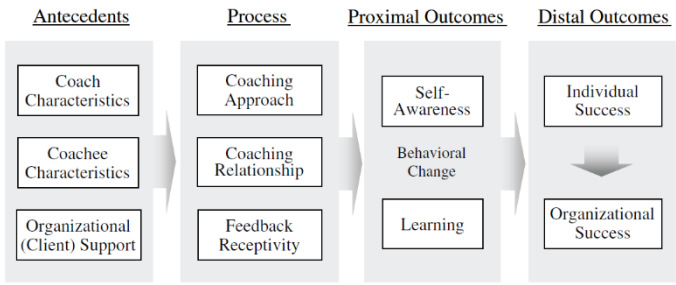

Fig. 3. Conceptual framework for successful executive coaching from Joo (2005)

The antecedents encompass both the coach's and the coachee's characteristics, along with support from the organization. The core components of the coaching process involve the coaching approach, the relationship between the coach and coachee, and the willingness to receive feedback. There are two primary results of executive coaching. The proximal outcomes pertain to shifts in behaviour, encompassing increased self-awareness and knowledge acquisition (learning). The distal outcomes, or ultimate goals, of executive coaching focus on both the success of the individual and the broader organizational success.

While Joo's 2005 framework is rooted in robust theoretical foundations, it was not until years later that efforts were made to put it into practice. Notable among these efforts is the study by Utrilla et al. (2015), which examined the impact of coaching on individual and organizational performance within a Spanish setting. They devised a research model based on Joo's framework, as depicted in Fig. 4.

Utrilla et al. (2015) complemented Joo's (2005) framework by using the social exchange theory and the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm. The social exchange theory was used to support the process dimension by justifying and linking the benefits that individuals (coach and coachees) perceive with the proximal outcomes. The resource-based view strategic theory was used to confirm that coaching confers strategic value on human resources, which means providing a valuable, rare, sustainable, and inimitable resource (Utrilla et al., 2015).

Following a similar but distinctive research approach, we built upon Joo's (2005) conceptual framework by integrating the organizational learning framework, which underpins the knowledge-based view of the firm. This augmented framework enabled us to examine how coaching interventions influence knowledge performance and the overall

customer experience performance through the enhancement of a learning organization culture.

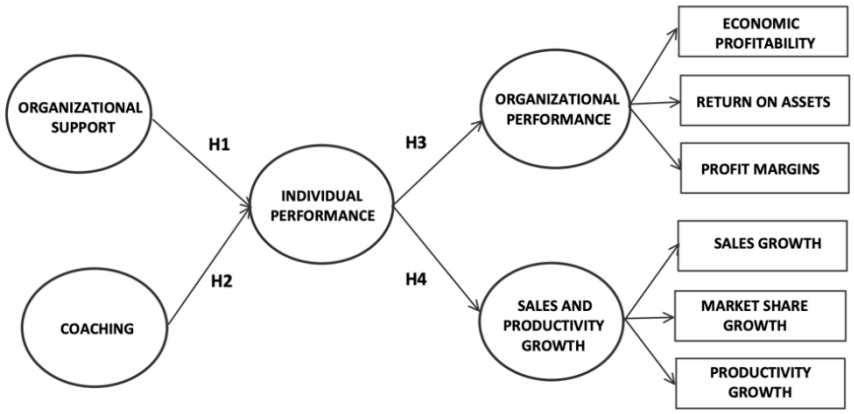

Fig. 4. Research model, Adapted from Utrilla et al. (2015)

2.9.1. Antecedents

Joo (2015) underscores the importance of the three-way dynamic between the coach, coachees, and the client organization in ensuring the efficacy of coaching interventions. For optimal results, the organization should articulate clear objectives for the intervention. It is imperative that top management and HR are fully invested in its success. The coach, on the other hand, should possess the necessary qualifications, and relevant experience, and uphold the highest standards of integrity. Concurrently, coachees need to be receptive to feedback and willing to adapt and change.

In the context of our research, a single coach was meticulously chosen based on their prior experience and credentials. We worked with two sets of car dealerships: one group which enjoyed robust backing from top management and HR, and another which had not yet secured such support. The coachees encompassed the entire staff of the dealerships that underwent the coaching interventions. Consequently, only the organizational support dimension (present or absent) was represented in our theoretical framework.

2.9.2. Coaching process

As mentioned in section 2.2, coaching is leveraged as a strategic organizational tool for diverse purposes. It aids in leadership development and nurturing future talents (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013), enhances employee competencies (Medland & Stern, 2009), and promotes well-being (Cartwright, 2022; Duijts et al., 2008; Grant et al., 2009). Furthermore, it bolsters operational efficiency and drives improved organizational results (Jones et al., 2016; Utrilla et al., 2015). Coaching also amplifies the performance of executives and broader staff alike (Bond & Seneque, 2013; Liske & Holladay, 2016; Olivero et al., 1997; Theeboom et al., 2014) and fosters a sense of leadership and organizational capability (LOC) (Ladyshewsky & Taplin, 2018). It supports multifaceted learning across individuals, teams, and entire organizations (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Building on Senge's (1990)

foundational view of learning organizations, coaching has emerged as a cornerstone in organizational learning, facilitating transformative change and performance enhancement (Bond & Seneque, 2013; Crabb, 2011).

Furthermore, as presented in section 2.6, previous studies suggested a strong integration between organizational learning and coaching in the context of organizational development and human resource development (HRD). This integration aims to facilitate organizational changes by developing the workforce and enhancing organizational learning capabilities (Garvey et al., 2021; Khakwani et al., 2012; Law, 2013).

H1: Coaching interventions (supported by top management and HR) help enhance learning organization culture.

Since all car dealers of the US automotive company (UAC) studied in this research are SMEs and family businesses, the target audiences of the coaching interventions are dealer principals, general managers, sales managers, service managers, and heads of all other unit divisions such as technicians, accounting, marketing, product specialists, etc. Therefore, various coaching methods, including business coaching, team coaching, and one-on-one coaching, as well as team training, are employed.

As explained in section 2.7, customer experience (CX) is defined as a strategic approach to creating holistic customer value and gaining competitive advantages (Jain et al., 2017), CX encompasses five main categories: product, experience, service experience, consumption experience, and shopping experience (Konrad, 2019). Historically, the automobile industry was product-centric, but the current emphasis is on fostering long-term relationships throughout the supply chain, particularly in retail. Given the high-value nature of automobile purchases and the limited number of customers, a stellar CX is vital to achieving customer satisfaction, loyalty, and enhanced organizational performance. However, shifting consumer behaviours, such as a desire for variety and new information sources, combined with digital advancements affecting purchasing methods (Scherpen et al., 2018), make it imperative for car companies and dealerships to prioritize and adapt their CX strategies. This context justifies why the studied US car company launched their customer experience management (CEM) program in 2011 in the USA and 2014 in Thailand. This subsidized program is not mandatory since the car dealers must pay to participate, which explains why not all of the car dealers selling this US car brand participated in this program. The UAC selected a global company to supply locally trained coaches to implement the program at the participating car dealers.

H2: Coaching interventions help enhance customer experience performance.

2.9.3. Proximal and distal outcomes

As presented in section 2,3, Watkins and Marsick's framework (see Fig. 1) for the learning organization is a well-regarded model in the field of organizational development. Watkins and Marsick's framework emphasize a holistic approach to organizational learning, promoting both individual and collective learning processes. This interconnectedness ensures that learning is embedded in the everyday practices and culture of the organization, leading to sustained growth and adaptation. In addition to the seven dimensions, the DLOQ also measures concrete learning outcomes related to improved organizational performance. The actual outcomes in terms of organizational performance will vary based on multiple factors, including the organization's industry, market dynamics, leadership, and more. However, the consensus in organizational development literature is that learning

capabilities are positively correlated with improved organizational performance across various metrics.

Since the framework originally emphasized organizational performance outcomes (knowledge performance and financial performance), further studies have also demonstrated the strong positive connections between the LOC and customer satisfaction in different industries: the insurance industry (Maleki, 2016), service industries (Islam et al., 2014) and ports, automobile service repair and supermarkets (Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2013).

H3: Learning organization culture positively impacts knowledge performance.

H4: Learning organization culture positively impacts customer experience performance.

H5: Learning organization culture serves as a mediator between coaching interventions on customer experience performance.

Based on the above discussion, the theoretical framework is presented in Fig. 5.

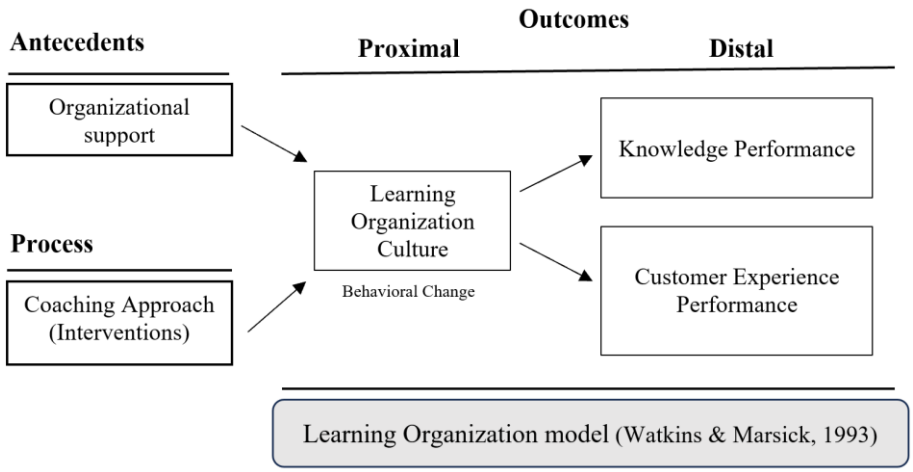

Fig. 5. Our theoretical framework based on Joo's (2005) conceptual framework

3. Research methodology and data collection

In order to operationalize our theoretical model into a testable conceptual model, a positivist paradigm was adopted, guided by the five main research hypotheses:

H1 & H2: Coaching interventions help enhance learning organization culture and customer experience performance.

H3 & H4: Learning organization culture positively impacts knowledge performance and customer experience performance.

H5: Learning organization culture serves as a mediator between coaching interventions on customer experience performance.

Our conceptual model is depicted in Fig. 6.

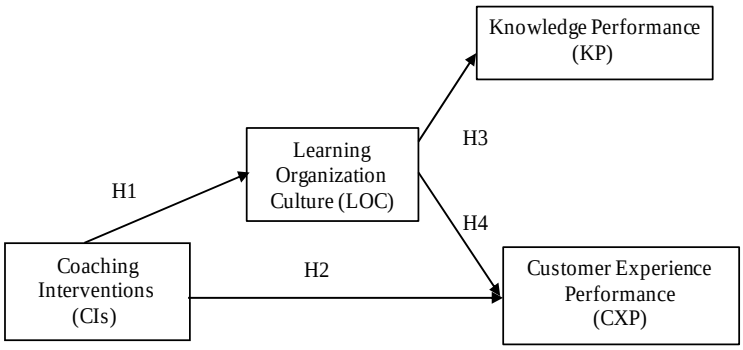

Fig. 6. Conceptual model

3.1. Measurement instruments

3.1.1. Learning organization culture (LOC)

Yang et al. (2004) reaffirmed that the learning organization is a multidimensional construct and recommended the use of the dimensions of learning organization culture (DLOQ) instrument for organizational case studies. The validity of the instrument has been confirmed even when alternative measurements between the seven dimensions of the LOC and various organizational performance outcomes are applied. Three versions of the DLOQ are available: 7, 21 and 43 questions (Marsick, 2013). Yang et al. (2004) demonstrated that the 21-question DLOQ is sufficient to produce reliable results regarding confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and exploratory factor analysis (EFA), with goodness of fit indices (GFI) at .92 and .87, respectively. Thirty CFAs were carried out between 1998–2012 (Kim et al., 2015) confirming these results. Therefore, the 21-item DLOQ was chosen for this case study.

Several empirical research studies using the DLOQ have been conducted in Thailand with a focus on the relationship between LOC and various organizational performance factors (Khunsoonthornkit & Panjakajornsak, 2018; Pimapunsri, 2008, 2014; Tuntivivat & Piriyakul, 2015). The Thai version of the 21-item DLOQ provided by Pimapunsri (2008, 2014) is used in the present study. Pimapunsri (2008) estimates the reliability of the Thai version of the DLOQ at .88, confirming that the DLOQ is reliable in a Thai context.

An adjusted Watkins & Marsick's DLOQ was applied to compare the four UAC car dealers who implemented the customer experience coaching interventions program with the three UAC car dealers who did not. The 35-item questionnaire applied is composed of three parts: 1) the 21-item DLOQ (Yang, 2004), 2) six items on KP (Marsick & Watkins, 2003), and 3) eight items on CXP (UAC's CX index questionnaire). The application of these questions by the UAC at a global scale over several years confirms their validity and reliability. The responses to these 35 questions were measured on a six-point Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015).

This adapted DLOQ evaluates the perception of employees on the improvement of LO based on the CIs under the CEM program. Moreover, it also evaluates whether the

applied CIs have impacts on the LOC that significantly led to CXP and KP improvement. For the original 21-item DLOQ, 1 means that the LO characteristics under each item had "*almost never been observed*" and 6 means that the learning culture characteristics under each item had "*almost always been observed*".

3.1.2. Knowledge performance (KP)

For this study, knowledge performance is defined as: "*enhancement of products and services because of learning and knowledge capacity (lead indicators of intellectual capital)*" (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). In order to measure the knowledge performance dimension, we reused the instrument items developed and validated by Marsick & Watkins (2003) as follows:

1. In my organization, customer satisfaction is greater than last year.
2. In my organization, the number of suggestions implemented is greater than last year.
3. In my organization, the number of new products or services is greater than last year.
4. In my organization, the percentage of skilled workers compared to the total workforce is greater than last year.
5. In my organization, the percentage of total spending devoted to technology and information processing is greater than last year.
6. In my organization, the number of individuals learning new skills is greater than last year.

3.1.3. Customer experience performance (CXP)

To measure the CXP, we reused the CX index measurement tool designed and implemented by UAC globally. This tool was used to track the progress of the car dealers participating in the CEM program and evaluate the performance of the sales consultants and service advisors (two questions). It also assessed the evolution of the overall CX for new car delivery and car-collecting after maintenance (two questions), the efficiency of sales and service commitments (two questions), the overall experience of financing/leasing or paying for a customer's new vehicle (one question), and the overall quality of the service performed (one question), as shown in Table 2. These eight questions cover the customer's overall experience regarding new car purchasing and service dimensions.

Table 2
Customer experience performance (CXP) questions

	Statement
CXP1	In my organization, the overall performance of sales consultants is better than last year.
CXP2	In my organization, the overall experience of financing/leasing or paying for a customer's new vehicle is better than last year.
CXP3	In my organization, the overall experience of taking delivery of a customer's new vehicle is better than last year.
CXP4	My organization is following through on sales commitments made to customers better than last year.
CXP5	In my organization, the overall performance of service advisors is better than last year.
CXP6	In my organization, the overall quality of the services performed is better than last year.
CXP7	In my organization, the overall process of picking up a customer's vehicle is better than last year.
CXP8	My organization is following through on service commitments made to customers better than last year.

For the 14 performance outcomes (6 + 8) items presented above, a scale score of 1 means that the respondents "*strongly disagree*" that the organizational performance improved over the last year and a score of 6 means that they "*strongly agree*" that the organizational performance improved over the last year.

3.2. Data collection

To test our conceptual model, an online survey was sent to seven car dealers of a well-known US automotive company based in Thailand. Four of these car dealers had received coaching interventions for at least three consecutive years (2017-2020) (coached dealers) and three car dealers had not (non-coached dealers).

The survey was conducted between November 2020 and January 2021. All employees of each dealer received the online survey from their general manager or human resource manager to ensure the validity of the survey. A total of 300 surveys were returned: 184 respondents from the four coached dealers and 116 from three non-coached dealers. The 300 surveys represent 69% of the total employees of these seven car dealers. On average, 87% of the coached dealers' employees and 52% of the non-coached dealers' employees responded. The distribution of the respondents between the different positions is similar for both the coached and non-coached dealers, and the ratio of the positions between the two groups of dealers also do not present significative differences. Respondents' most frequent types of positions were frontline, back office, and technicians for both the coached and non-coached dealers. These three positions represent 79% of the total respondents. Female respondents are more represented than male respondents in the sample with a 53% to 47% ratio for both the coached and non-coached dealers combined, and 75% of the respondents had less than 5 years of work experience. The age distribution shows that 62% of the respondents were 18 to 35 years old. Therefore, despite the fact that the population size of each participating dealer is different, the overall size and composition of the sample for both coached and non-coached dealers ensure its validity and reflect the perception of each car dealer's employees.

3.3. Statistical analysis

Since our coaching variable is a dummy variable (coaching interventions or not), the results of the two groups must be compared. The independent samples t-test was used to compare the means of our two independent groups to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between them. In this study, there are two independent groups: the coached dealers and the non-coached dealers.

Therefore, for H1 and H2, an independent samples t-test was used to test whether the impact of CIs on the seven sub-dimensions of the LOC and CXP is significant between these two groups: the coached car dealers and the non-coached car dealers.

H3 and H4 investigate the relationship between the LOC and the organizational performance of both KP and CXP for the coached dealers. Since there is one independent variable (LOC) and two dependent variables (KP and CXP), multivariate linear regression was applied. In order to further examine the relationship between the LOC and both KP and CXP at the LOC sub-dimensional level, a multivariate multiple regression analysis was also required since there are seven independent variables (LOC) and two dependent variables (KP and CXP).

H5 tests the possible moderating effect of the LOC on the relationship between CIs and CXP; thus, both simple and multiple regression analysis were used.

4. Findings

4.1. Reliability estimates

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the internal reliability of the DLOQ items. Although the internal reliability of the DLOQ was established by previous DLOQ studies (Ellinger et al., 2002; Sheng et al., 2021; Watkins & Dirani, 2013; Yang et al., 2004), pilot testing with the UAC car dealer samples was carried out to ensure the baseline reliability of the survey. The reliability estimates for the DLOQ dimensions for this study compared to those of the research findings from Yang et al. (2004) and Sheng et al. (2021) show that the modified DLOQ in this study had a comparable but higher reliability estimate. The reliability estimates of this study are on average higher than .90 (ranging between .88 to .98), except for the continuous learning dimension at .88. According to Nunnally (1978), Cronbach's alpha values above .70 are considered to indicate an acceptable degree of reliability.

4.2. Correlations among learning organization culture (LOC) (and its sub-dimensions) and knowledge and customer experience performances (KP and CXP)

In order to test Hypotheses 3 and 4, we looked at the correlation coefficients among the seven sub-dimensions of LOC, and the two performance outcomes, KP and CXP, are positively high, ranging between .770 and .928, and are statistically significant at $p < .001$ for all variables. The correlations among the seven sub-dimensions of the LOC are between .841 and .928, while the correlations among the seven dimensions of the LOC and CXP and KP are between .762 and .875. Furthermore, the correlation between CXP and KP is high at .922. However, a strong correlation can also be interpreted as over-correlation, which may violate the assumption of multicollinearity (Asitok & Ekpenyong, 2019). Multicollinearity was therefore tested using variance inflation factors (VIF). The VIF of each of the predictor variables is still considered within the acceptable range of collinearity at 10 or less. Consequently, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were validated.

4.3. Impacts of the coaching interventions (CIs) on the learning organization culture (LOC) and on the customer experience performance (CXP)

In order to test Hypotheses 1 and 2, an independent samples t-test was used, and the results are presented in Table 3. These findings confirm that CIs produced a significant impact on all seven sub-dimensions of the LOC and CXP ($p < .001$, one-tailed). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are accepted.

Moreover, Hedges' g results demonstrated that CIs present the highest impact (medium to large) on the SC dimension, followed by TL, ES, SL and EP, respectively. The DI and CL are the dimensions least impacted (Medium) by CIs. However, CXP is the variable shown to be the most impacted by the CIs.

Table 3
Means, standard deviations and *t*-test comparison between coached dealers and non-coached dealers for Hypotheses 1 and 2

	Coached $N = 184$		Non-coached $N = 116$						
Variables	M	SD	M	SD	*F*	*t*	*p**	*g***	95% CI*** LL, UL
CL	4.25	1.16	3.68	1.07	2.54	4.22	.001	0.50	[0.26, 0.74]
DI	4.21	1.27	3.60	1.06	8.30	4.48	.001	0.51	[0.27, 0.74]
TL	4.30	1.22	3.53	1.03	7.71	5.84	.001	0.66	[0.43, 0.90]
ES	4.33	1.20	3.59	1.08	3.37	5.39	.001	0.64	[0.40, 0.88]
EP	4.33	1.20	3.60	1.10	3.99	5.35	.001	0.62	[0.38, 0.86]
SC	4.23	1.23	3.44	1.11	3.50	5.62	.001	0.67	[0.42, 0.90]
SL	4.41	1.25	3.65	1.11	4.39	5.51	.001	0.63	[0.40, 0.87]
CXP	4.37	1.15	3.64	0.96	4.35	5.94	.001	0.68	[0.44, 0.91]

Note. **p* value for one-tailed t-test results, **Hedges' *g* effect size, ***CI = Confidence Interval, LL = lower limit, UL = upper limit.

The multivariate regression was also applied to investigate the relationship between LOC and both KP and CXP (H3). A significant multivariate positive effect was found, Pillai's trace = .81, $F(2, 181) = 391.99$, $p = < .001$. Also, the multivariate regression results (see Table 4) lead to the acceptance of Hypothesis 3. Therefore, the LOC that undergoes CIs significantly impacts both KP and CXP.

Table 4
Parameter estimates from multivariate linear regression analysis for Hypothesis 3

Dependent variables	Parameter	B	SE	*t*	*p*	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
KP	Intercept	.47	.15	3.26	< .001	.19	.76
	LO	.89	.03	27.17	< .001	.83	.95
CXP	Intercept	.65	.16	4.11	< .001	.34	.97
	LO	.87	.04	24.26	< .001	.80	.94

Note. $N = 184$

Similarly, the impact of each of the seven dimensions of the LOC on both KP and CXP was further investigated using multivariate multiple regression (H4). The results confirm a significant multivariate effect of the relationship between the LOC at the sub-dimension level and both KP and CXP, Pillai's trace = .89, $F(14, 352) = 20.02$, $p < .001$. Table 5 provides the results of each regression from the multivariate test.

The *p*-values observed validate Hypothesis 4. CL significantly impacts KP, whereas only SL significantly impacts both KP and CXP. As a result, only two sub-dimensions of the LOC, CL and SL, have a significant and positive influence on the performance outcomes.

Since the CEM coaching program focuses on improving CXP, the mediating role of the LOC on the impact of CIs on CXP was examined (H5). The mediation analysis reveals a significant indirect effect of the LOC on the impact of CIs on CXP as depicted in Fig. 7. The direct impact of CIs on CXP is only 16% (B = .16, $p = .037$), whereas the impact of CIs on CXP via LOC accounts for 57% of CIs (B = .57, $p < .001$). Therefore, Hypothesis

5 is validated: the LOC partially mediates the impact of CIs on the CXP. Moreover, the data in Fig. 7. also confirms the positive impact of CIs on the LOC (B = .71, $p < .001$).

Table 5
Parameter estimates from multivariate multiple regression analysis for Hypothesis 4

Dependent variables	Parameter	B	SE	*t*	*p*	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
KP	Intercept	.40	.14	2.79	.006	.12	.68
	CL	.26	.08	3.18	.002	.10	.41
	DI	- .02	.07	- 0.21	.832	- .16	.13
	TL	.02	.09	0.27	.786	- .15	.20
	ES	- .02	.10	- 0.15	.881	- .21	.18
	EP	.18	.11	1.73	.085	- .03	.39
	SC	.04	.10	0.39	.697	- .16	.24
	SL	.43	.08	5.29	< .001	.27	.58
CXP	Intercept	.67	.16	4.13	< .001	.35	.98
	CL	.09	.09	0.95	.344	- .09	.26
	DI	.09	.08	1.12	.264	- .07	.26
	TL	.06	.10	0.63	.533	- .14	.26
	ES	- .04	.11	- 0.31	.753	- .26	.19
	EP	.10	.12	0.82	.413	- .14	.33
	SC	.18	.11	1.59	.114	- .04	.40
	SL	.37	.09	4.12	< .001	.19	.55

Note. N = 184

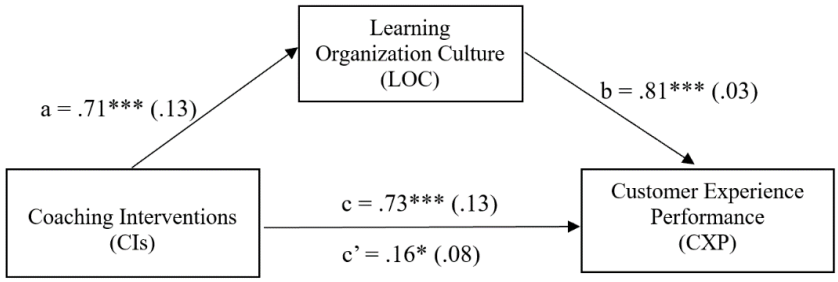

Fig. 7. The mediating effect of the learning organization culture for Hypothesis 5. a, b, c and c' are path coefficients representing unstandardized regression weights and standard errors (in parentheses). The c path coefficient refers to the total effect of the CIs on the CXP. The c-prime path coefficient represents the direct effect of the CIs on the CXP. All analysed paths are significant, $*p < .05$, $***p < 0.001$

The *p*-values observed validate Hypothesis 4. CL significantly impacts KP, whereas only SL significantly impacts both KP and CXP. As a result, only two sub-dimensions of the LOC, CL and SL, have a significant and positive influence on the performance outcomes.

Since the CEM coaching program focuses on improving CXP, the mediating role of the LOC on the impact of CIs on CXP was examined (H5). The mediation analysis reveals a significant indirect effect of the LOC on the impact of CIs on CXP as depicted in Fig. 7. The direct impact of CIs on CXP is only 16% (B = .16, $p = .037$), whereas the impact

of CIs on CXP via LOC accounts for 57% of CIs (B = .57, $p < .001$). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is validated: the LOC partially mediates the impact of CIs on the CXP. Moreover, the data in Fig. 7. also confirms the positive impact of CIs on the LOC (B = .71, $p < .001$).

5. Discussion

5.1. Coaching interventions (CIs), learning organization culture (LOC) at the sub-dimensional level, and customer experience performance (CXP)

The research findings confirm that the coaching interventions (CIs) have a significant positive impact on all seven sub-dimensions of the LOC and the customer experience performance (CXP). All LOC sub-dimensions and CXP were significantly higher when the Thai UAC car dealers participated in the CEM coaching program. This validates Hypotheses 1 and 2. However, the scope of the positive impacts of the CIs is of variable importance depending on the considered sub-dimensions. The highest positive impact of CIs is on the CXP, followed by SC, TL, ES, SL, EP, DI and CL, respectively. This improvement of the seven sub-dimensions of the LOC reveals an overall progression for the coached car dealers, which also generates competitive advantages. This constitutes tangible proof of the success of the CIs and explains why car dealers continue enrolling and investing in this cost-subsidized CEM program as it improves their CXP faster. Thus, the return on investment of the CEM coaching interventions at the Thai UAC car dealers is empirically measurable and therefore justifiable.

5.2. Coaching interventions (CIs), learning organization culture (LOC), knowledge performance (KP) and customer experience performance (CXP)

Since the CEM's CIs significantly improve each sub-dimension of the LOC, its application to the LOC improvement collectively is also justified. Therefore, the multivariate tests were used to confirm whether the improvement of the LOC through CIs both at the unidimensional and sub-dimensional levels would significantly impact the improvement of both KP and CXP. The findings confirm that LOC improvement at the unidimensional level (LOC as one dimension) benefits both the KP and CXP. This validates Hypothesis 3.

5.3. Coaching interventions (CIs), learning organization culture (LOC) at the sub-dimensional level CIs, knowledge performance (KP), and customer experience performance (CXP)

However, at the sub-dimensional level (the seven dimensions of the LOC), we found that only CL has a positive impact on KP, and that SL has a positive impact on both KP and CXP. This validates Hypothesis 4.

The main objective of UAC's CEM coaching program is to improve CXP for its branded car dealers in Thailand. The CEM coaching program is a global standardized program but leaves room for customization at the local coach's discretion in each country based on each dealer's current situation and challenges. Customizations of the CIs are necessary to take into account the cultural, structural, and managerial differences encountered among the dealers (organizational structure, size of the organization, organizational culture, company policies, team leaders' commitment, sales targets, etc.).

Therefore, a flexible approach to the CIs is required to improve the program's efficiency even if the same coaching roadmap and themes are followed as stipulated by UAC. Consequently, coaching and training activities are marginally adapted to the particular needs of each car dealer. This explains why the content of the CIs provided at the individual car dealers is not entirely the same. The CEM coach needs to train and empower the owner, managers, team leaders, front-line staff, and technicians in order to improve the leadership quality, team collaboration, employee engagement, and workflow system to enhance the customer experience outcomes and achieve the goals of the CEM coaching program. Since CIs focus on leadership development and CX enhancement through the establishment and implementation of a continuous learning (coaching and mentoring) strategy, it is not surprising that only the SL dimension impacts KP and CXP and CL impact KP. In other words, the establishment of a CL strategy with the leaders (SL) and its implementation leads to CXP and KP improvement. However, the CIs do not sufficiently contribute to the enhancement of other sub-dimensions for them to positively impact KP, CXP, or both. Due to the time constraints, the use of CIs could not address the challenges related to each of the seven sub-dimensions of the LOC.

Moreover, the present results confirm previously observed strong positive connections between the LOC and KP in various industries: manufacturing and services (Davis & Daley, 2008); finance, insurance and high-tech (Lien et al., 2006); manufacturing in electronics, chemicals, retail, automotive parts, food, and paper (Ellinger et al., 2002); and non-profit organizations (McHargue, 2000). The present results also confirm previously observed strong positive connections between the LOC and customer satisfaction in several industries: the insurance industry (Maleki, 2016); service industries (Islam et al., 2014) and ports, automobile service repair and supermarkets (Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2013). This empirical evidence of the positive impacts of LOC on KP and CX across industries shows the importance of learning process reinforcement for organizations willing to improve their performance, whatever the context.

The CEM coaching interventions program focuses on the leadership development of car dealers' owners, top managers, managers, and supervisors. Most leaders of car dealers are part of the CEM leadership teams and participate in the coaching interventions' activities. Their leadership is developed using training, one-on-one coaching, and group coaching. The managers are specifically taught to better coach and mentor their teams. Therefore, the fact that SL presents the highest score for the coached dealers is not surprising. More importantly, at the sub-dimensional level, SL is the only dimension of the LOC that impacts both KP and CXP. This validates the relevancy of the focus of the CEM coaching interventions program on leadership. The improvement of leadership qualities allows for better engagement with the employees and ultimately leads to customer experience enhancement. The critical role of the SL dimension also confirms the previous observations reported for different organizational contexts and different countries (Watkins & Kim, 2018). However, the hierarchical importance of the remaining sub-dimensions of LOC in Thailand does not present the same pattern compared with other countries. Therefore, since the present study does not cover these cultural aspects of organizational behaviour, this cannot be confirmed and needs further investigation.

Although the CL dimension only significantly impacts the KP, the CEM program catalyses the exchange of know-what – explicit knowledge – and know-how – tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966) among all employees. The establishment and strengthening of the knowledge-sharing processes helps employees exchange more and improve the quality of their knowledge, which leads to team performance improvement (Jiang et al., 2016).

Moreover, knowledge-sharing methods are also positively influenced by motivational factors (Azizi et al., 2023). Their findings also suggest that motivational factors act as a mediator between knowledge sharing and knowledge creation (Centobelli & Cerchione, 2023). Recent research from Umer et al. (2023) also confirms the positive impact of knowledge transfer on knowledge workers' productivity through fostering knowledge creation and knowledge utilization, respectively. Since the collective knowledge pool transcends the knowledge of any individual member and the corporation's documentation (Brown & Duguid, 2000), the knowledge-sharing process empowerment contributes to CXP improvement over time. Empirical evidence of the significant and positive impact of knowledge sharing on CXP has already been provided in other industries, including banking (Hasanzadeh & Mahaleh, 2013) and private hospitals (Maraqa, 2019). Moreover, knowledge sharing also allows for the reinforcement of competitive advantages through cost reduction, team performance improvement, and innovation capabilities development (Lin, 2017; Podrug et al., 2017).

5.4. Coaching interventions (CIs), learning organization culture (LOC), and customer experience performance (CXP)

It was found that the impact of the CIs on the CXP is partially mediated by the LOC. This validates Hypothesis 5. This also supports the notion that building the LOC in parallel with improving CXP can help leverage the impact of CIs on CXP significantly and sustainably. Although the main focus of the CEM coaching program is not on improving the LOC, its variety of interventions and activities naturally help to improve the LOC somewhat. The mediating effect of the LOC also implies that the impact of the CEM coaching interventions program on CXP can be reinforced by focusing more of the content of CIs on the improvement of the LOC, especially regarding SL and CL. Since all seven sub-dimensions of the LOC are highly correlated, improving one dimension would impact the others as well. Therefore, if future CIs can extend their focus and resources to the improvement of the LOC at the sub-dimensional level, the impact of CIs on CXP will be significantly higher, especially when compared with the non-coached dealers. However, to what extent that improvement and the adjustment of the CIs activities can help enhance the organizational performance outcomes needs to be further examined.

6. Limitations

The present study presents several limitations. Since only the organizational outcomes from car dealers' employees' perceptions were measured, the measurement of actual performance indicators, especially CXP, would reinforce the results obtained. Moreover, depending on a car dealer's structural and cultural particularities, the content of CIs must be adjusted and therefore, is partially heterogeneous. To better consider the various stages of LOC progress achieved by organizations following the CEM program, a pre- and post-coaching evaluation of the LOC in these organizations is required to better estimate the actual impact of the CIs on both the LOC and the performance outcomes. It would also help to distinguish the impact of the CEM coaching interventions program from the impact of other interventions on the DLOQ scores obtained. Furthermore, the impact of CIs varies due to multiple factors, such as the car dealer's level of commitment, the employees' level of commitment, the coach's expertise, the automotive company's policies and incentive schemes, etc. Therefore, an explorative SEM approach would reveal the connections of

these variables to the applied framework and would help to measure to what extent they impact the development of an LOC and the performance outcomes. Finally, SL is of critical importance as an "*integral aspect of the vision and journey of becoming a learning organization*" (Antonacopoulou et al., 2019, p. 313). Therefore, following Ellinger and Ellinger (2021), further examination of the efficiency of specific types of CIs focusing on leadership development would help determine which tools and activities are the most valuable to develop the LOC and support CXP enhancement. Such exploration of the micro-foundations of the LOC would also help reveal which types of interventions most effectively support the creation and development of an LOC (Watkins & Kim, 2018).

Since several sub-dimensions of the DLOQ do not correlate with CXP, further qualitative analysis would help determine why this is the case. Such exploration would also allow for a better understanding of the importance of the mediating effect of each of the seven sub-dimensions of the LOC between CIs and CXP and would provide insights regarding the importance of the moderating effect of CIs between the LOC and the performance outcomes. Moreover, a qualitative analysis would help better qualify how CIs support LOC and CXP development.

7. Conclusions

This study offers a quadruple academic contribution. Firstly, it augments Joo's (2005) esteemed framework for executive coaching by embedding the learning organization model. While Joo's (2005) framework stands on solid theoretical grounds, practical applications only emerged years subsequent to its introduction. Yet, efforts to operationalize his framework are still limited. Our research not only validates but also expands Joo's model, grounding it in a knowledge-based perspective of the firm, since previous operationalizations of his framework were rooted in the resource-based view of the firm (Utrilla et al., 2015). Secondly, it empirically examines and underscores the positive influence of coaching interventions on learning organizations, highlighting the subsequent benefits for organizational performance.

Thirdly, it validates Watkins and Marsick's (1993, 1996) conceptual framework in the Thai car dealer context and extends it by adding the relationship between the learning organization culture and customer experience, including its relationship at the dimensional level of learning organization. Furthermore, it connects the learning organization culture framework with coaching interventions, and the results show that the impact of coaching interventions on customer experience is partially mediated by the learning organization culture.

Finally, we provide several initial research contributions (initial research bricks) on the role of coaching interventions in the development of an organizational learning culture, a topic that has been relatively overlooked until now. Becoming a learning organization remains a challenge for many organizations, primarily due to cultural barriers. This study demonstrates that certain types of external coaching interventions can aid organizations in the transition towards becoming a learning organization at all levels (individual, team and organizational). In doing so, not only will knowledge flows improve, but so will their indirect benefits.

Beyond the theoretical and empirical contributions, this study also provides insights for organizational leaders, HR managers, internal coaches, and external coaches. It should help decrease the scepticism often observed regarding coaching interventions' efficiency.

Our initial findings confirm the efficiency of the customer experience management program to reinforce the Thai car dealers' customer experience performance by enhancing their organizational learning culture. This should help the US automotive company executives and organizational development experts convince their dealers, both in Thailand and other countries, to join the customer experience management programs and implement coaching interventions as a long-term strategy in order to improve their learning organization culture and customer experience performance in parallel. Moreover, the demonstration that the strategic leadership for learning (SL) dimension is perceived as the most critical sub-dimension of the Learning Organization Culture should help car dealers' leaders and coaches better customize the content of coaching interventions by focusing on organizational leaders' ability to coach and mentor their teams in order to continually improve their competencies and to consistently align their actions with the organizational strategies. In addition, the continuous improvement of all employees' learning ability and the learning atmosphere also appears to be critical in this context (the CL dimension).

To conclude, we can say that from an academic standpoint, this exploratory study establishes the foundation for examining the integration of the enhancement of organizational learning through coaching interventions within the context of organizational development and human resource development. Several challenges can arise from this integration, such as resistance to change, cultural barriers, and logistical constraints. Consequently, the identification of metrics, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative aspects, becomes imperative for assessing the effectiveness of this integration. This, in turn, can facilitate the development of a theoretical model to elucidate these interrelationships.

Author Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all UAC car dealership owners and staff for participating in this research project.

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