Chapter 6
Unpacking Power Dynamics in Coaching and Leadership:
A Critical Examination

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the critical viewpoints regarding the convergences of coaching and leadership, elucidating the intricate complexities of power relations. Incorporated case studies from the business and nonprofit sectors shed light on the difficulties and achievements in these realms of transformation. The integration of insights gained underscores the profound impact of consciousness, openness, and moral behaviour on change. The obligation to exercise authority with discernment, promote inclusiveness, and empower entities and individuals alike. This study offers significant contributions for professionals, academics, and executives traversing the complex landscape of coaching and leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Within the ever-evolving domains of guidance and leadership, the interrelation of power dynamics is a constant presence that is frequently disregarded. Generally, coaching and leadership serve as conduits for individual and organizational development. Nevertheless, these environments provide favourable conditions for the establishment of power imbalances that have the potential to impact results and interpersonal connections significantly. To illuminate the complex network of power dynamics within coaching and leadership, this chapter seeks to expose their nuanced ramifications and stimulate critical thought. Power is present in various manifestations and influences all aspects of human interaction, significantly impacting the dynamics of coaching engagements and leadership practices. Power, in its various forms (e.g., hierarchical structures, expertise, and relational dynamics), significantly influences the parameters, obligations, and results of guidance and leadership pursuits. However, ideological narratives of empowerment and collaboration frequently obfuscate the discourse surrounding power in these contexts, ignoring the intricate realities underpinning interpersonal interactions. By conducting a thorough analysis of power dynamics, this chapter reveals the latent prejudices, systemic disparities, and moral quandaries intrinsic to the dynamics of guidance and leadership. A critical analysis of how power is allocated, employed, and validated can reveal its effects on organizational cultures, decision-making processes, and interpersonal interactions.

Furthermore, through an analysis of the intersectionality of power dynamics, it is possible to clarify how coaching and leadership experiences are influenced in varied and frequently unjust ways by the intersection of gender, race, socioeconomic status, and privilege. By incorporating theoretical perspectives from critical management studies, feminist theory, postcolonial theory, and critical race theory, this chapter analyzes power dynamics in mentoring and leadership through a multidisciplinary framework. By amalgamating viewpoints from diverse academic fields, our objective is to provide an all-encompassing structure that facilitates comprehension and manoeuvring through the intricacies of power in these particular circumstances. In essence, this chapter invites readers to engage in critical introspection regarding their duties and obligations as coaches and leaders. It urges them to scrutinize their preconceived notions, prejudices, and behaviours concerning power dynamics. Our objective is to empower professionals in the coaching and leadership field to develop more ethical, inclusive, and transformative practices that respect the dignity and autonomy of all stakeholders by increasing their awareness of the underlying forces.

Over the past few years, the significance of analyzing power dynamics in coaching and leadership contexts has become increasingly apparent. Even with this recognition, discourse concerning power in these domains has frequently been eclipsed by more sanguine narratives that revolve around cooperation and empowerment. To fill this

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