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Employee Perceptions of Coaching Relationship Quality: A Change-Over-Time Study of Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions

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ABSTRACT

To remain competitive, organisations increasingly rely on human resources (HR) to operate as a strategic business partner responsible for developing employee capability. Although prior research highlights the centrality of supervisor–employee relationships for effective coaching, little is known about whether employees' perceptions of the quality of the coaching relationship (PQECR) change over time and how such change shapes work outcomes. This gap is consequential for HR because organisations depend on HR systems, training and ongoing support to build and sustain coaching capability. Guided by social exchange theory, this study investigates whether within-person changes in PQECR correspond with changes in job satisfaction and turnover intentions, two outcomes of concern for HR. Using residual-change-modelling on two waves of data from 187 formally coached employees in New Zealand, results show that fluctuations in PQECR meaningfully predict changes in both work outcomes. The findings extend social exchange theory by positioning the coaching relation as a valuable yet dynamic relational resource. Practically, the study highlights a strategic opportunity for HR to strengthen employee wellbeing and retention by designing systems that enable supervisors to develop coaching expertise and sustain high-quality coaching relationships over time.

1 | Introduction

Contemporary organisations increasingly expect human resources (HR) to operate as a strategic business partner, building workforce capabilities that contribute toward the organisation gaining a competitive advantage (Stone 2017). As part of this strategic mandate, it is anticipated that HR professionals will design, implement and maintain agile people management systems that develop employees and support supervisors, thereby aligning HR strategies with the organisation's business strategy (Ananthram and Nankervis 2013). One such system is employee coaching, where supervisors work one-on-one with their direct reports to support their development and performance goals (Ellinger et al. 2003). Employee coaching reflects a broader shift in leadership practice from directive, control-based approaches towards models that emphasise equipping, enabling and developing employees (Grant 2017; Pousa et al. 2018). Researchers have highlighted employee coaching's potential to strengthen organisational competitiveness by motivating and empowering employees (David and Matu 2013), developing talent (Lin et al. 2017), fostering innovation (Wang 2013) and improving in-role performance (Huang and Hsieh 2015). As organisations embed coaching into supervisory roles (Koskinen and Anderson 2023), HR's responsibility is to ensure that supervisors have the capability, support and organisational conditions required to coach effectively (Dainty 2011; Kapoutzis et al. 2024).

Despite employee coaching's strategic relevance, a central HR question remains insufficiently addressed: how do coaching practices translate into meaningful employee work outcomes and what role does the supervisor–employee coaching relationship

Key Points

- Supervisor–employee coaching relationships function as a dynamic relational resource that fluctuates over time, highlighting the need for HR systems that help maintain consistently high-quality coaching relationships.
- Within-person improvements in PQECR are associated with higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions, underscoring the importance of relational quality for HR-relevant employee outcomes.
- HR can fulfil its strategic role by designing and implementing systems that enable supervisors to sustain high-quality coaching relationships through formal training, protected coaching time and ongoing support for coaching capability.

play in this process? Although coaching is inherently relational (Batson and Yoder 2012), prior research has largely focused on technical skills and behaviours, often overlooking the relational context in which coaching occurs (Tanskanen et al. 2019). The employee's perceived quality of the coaching relationship (PQECR) represents a promising yet underexamined construct that may explain why coaching efforts succeed or fail (Gregory and Levy 2010). PQECR captures employees' evaluations of the genuineness, supportiveness and developmental value of the coaching relationship (Gregory and Levy 2010). Employees respond more favourably to coaching practice when they perceive the coaching relationship to be authentic, supportive and aligned with their interests (Koskinen and Anderson 2023). However, because supervisors must balance coaching with competing managerial responsibilities (Lawrence 2017), relational quality is unlikely to remain stable over time.

This gap is consequential for HR. Job satisfaction and turnover intentions are two of the most widely studied indicators of employee wellbeing (Judge and Klinger 2008) and retention (e.g., Wilkinson and Haar 2023), and both fall squarely within HR's strategic responsibility (Ananthram and Nankervis 2013; Stone 2017). Prior research shows that PQECR predicts both outcomes (Mowat et al. 2025), but existing studies rely on cross-sectional designs, preventing insight into whether changes in job satisfaction and turnover intentions correspond with changes in PQECR. Given that the frequency and quality of coaching interactions fluctuate due to time pressures, inconsistent supervisory behaviours and organisational constraints (Chen et al. 2019; McCarthy and Milner 2020), employees continuously update their perceptions of the coaching relationship. Understanding whether these fluctuations matter for work outcomes is essential for designing and maintaining effective coaching systems.

Strategic human resource management requires HR to translate business strategy into people management strategy (Stone 2017), design systems that support strategic agility (Ananthram and Nankervis 2013), and develop the relational and developmental conditions that shape employee attitudes and behaviours (Dainty 2011). Coaching systems are a mechanism HR can leverage to enact its strategic partner role. However, the effectiveness of coaching practices depends on the relational quality experienced by employees. Therefore, if PQECR fluctuates and these fluctuations shape employee outcomes then HR must account for relational variability when designing coaching systems, training supervisors and allocating resources. In this study, we conceptualise PQECR as a dynamic relational resource that evolves as employees interpret their ongoing interactions with their supervisor. Accordingly, we examine whether PQECR fluctuates meaningfully over time and whether such fluctuations correspond with changes in job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

This study makes three contributions. First, it advances the employee coaching literature by positioning PQECR as a dynamic relational construct that, together with coaching skills, supports employee development and performance. Second, it provides the first empirical test of whether within-person changes in PQECR predict corresponding changes in job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Third, it offers a clear HR contribution by demonstrating that HR people management systems can be more effectively designed to support and sustain employee coaching capability, highlighting the need for HR to invest not only in coaching skills training but also in the relational conditions that enable supervisors to maintain high-quality coaching relationships that enhance employee wellbeing and retention.

2 | Theory and Hypotheses

2.1 | Social Exchange Theory (SET)

SET provides the primary theoretical lens for understanding how relational experiences between employees and their supervisors shape employee attitudes and behaviours. SET proposes that when individuals perceive they have received valuable socioemotional resources from another party, offered in goodwill, they experience a strong sense of gratitude that motivates reciprocation through helpful attitudes and behaviours (Blau 1964). In workplace contexts, employees continuously evaluate their interactions with their supervisors, assessing whether they feel genuinely supported, valued, and thus motivated to reciprocate. This is particularly the case in coaching contexts where power, trust, role clarity and relational quality are constantly monitored and interpreted (Spaten and Flensborg 2013).

Within this framework, the supervisor–employee coaching relationship can be conceptualised as a relational job resource, signalling supervisory investment, care and developmental support. When employees perceive the coaching relationship to be high-quality, they are more likely to reciprocate positively (Koskinen and Anderson 2023). Conversely, when relational quality deteriorates, employees may withdraw or reduce their commitment. SET therefore provides a compelling basis for examining how changes in PQECR correspond with changes in employee work outcomes.

2.2 | Supervisor–Employee Coaching Relationships as Relational Resources

Supervisor–employee coaching relationships are defined as collaborative partnerships focused on supporting employees'

development and performance needs (Gregory and Levy 2010). High-quality coaching relationships are characterised by authenticity, empathy and genuine supervisory investment (Batson and Yoder 2012; Koskinen and Anderson 2023), and genuine supervisor–coaches derive intrinsic satisfaction from supporting employee growth (McCarthy and Milner 2020; Spaten and Flensborg 2013). While related to constructs such as leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived supervisor support (PSS), coaching relationships are conceptually distinct because their foundational purpose is employee development rather than transactional exchange or organisational benefit. In this sense, coaching relationships contrast with LMX, which is conceptually grounded in reciprocal exchange of resources (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995), and are less instrumental than PSS, which ultimately serves the organisation's talent retention and competitiveness goals (Kottke and Sharafinski 1988).

Relational experiences with supervisors are often classified as job resources within the job demand–resources (JD-R) model (Bakker and Demerouti 2017). Job resources broadly include aspects of an employee's job that buffer against job stressors such as physical work and compulsory citizenship behaviours (Zhang et al. 2026). Within this category, relational resources, such as the supervisor–employee coaching relationship, represent a distinct subset of socioemotional job resources that arise from high-quality interpersonal exchanges. In this context, the JD-R model and SET overlap. However, for clarity, we conceptualise employees' perception of the coaching relationship as a relational resource rather than a job resource, which is consistent with SET's emphasis on reciprocal socioemotional exchanges.

Despite the centrality of relational quality to coaching effectiveness, PQECR remains underexamined (Koskinen and Anderson 2023). Existing studies have relied on cross-sectional designs, limiting insight into whether PQECR is stable or dynamic. Yet, coaching interactions are likely to be inherently variable. Supervisors differ in their availability, relational behaviours and developmental focus (Grant 2017; Ladyshewsky and Taplin 2017; Lawrence 2017) and employees continuously update their evaluations of the coaching relationship in response to these experiences (Spaten and Flensborg 2013). Even a single negative interaction may diminish perceived relational value (Echeverri 2020), while consistent positive interactions may strengthen it. Understanding whether PQECR fluctuates is important for HR because its systems rely on supervisors maintaining high-quality coaching relationships over time (Grant 2017). Thus, relational variability may influence the outcomes HR seeks to improve. This leads to our first Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *Employee PQECR fluctuates over time.*

2.3 | PQECR and Employee Work Outcomes

Job satisfaction reflects employees' affective evaluation of their job and is one of the most widely studied indicators of employee wellbeing (Judge and Klinger 2008). Job satisfaction is central to strategic HR because it is strongly associated with desirable organisational outcomes such as performance, organisational citizenship behaviours and talent retention (Griffin et al. 2017). High-quality supervisory relationships are consistently associated with higher job satisfaction (Dansereau et al. 1975; Lawrence 2017), and PQECR has been shown to positively predict job satisfaction (Mowat et al. 2025). This suggests that employees interpret high-quality coaching relationships as favourable supervisory treatment, enhancing employee wellbeing.

Turnover intentions, defined as an intention to search for another job, searching for another job and an intention to quit one's job (Mobley et al. 1979), are strong predictors of actual turnover (Böckerman and Ilmakunnas 2009), which is costly for organisations (Wilkinson and Haar 2023). Relational experiences with supervisors are well-established antecedents of turnover intentions: abusive supervision increases turnover intentions (Haar et al. 2016), and supervisor neglect can have similar effects (Böckerman and Ilmakunnas 2009). PQECR has been found to negatively predict turnover (Mowat et al. 2025), indicating that high-quality coaching relationships may reduce employees' desire to leave.

However, these findings are based on cross-sectional designs. SET suggests that employees will adjust their level of reciprocation in response to ongoing relational experiences with their supervisor. If PQECR is dynamic, then changes in employees' perception of the coaching relationship over time should correspond with changes in work outcomes. When PQECR improves, employees may feel increasingly valued and supported, resulting in higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Conversely, when PQECR deteriorates over time, employees may feel overlooked or less supported, reducing satisfaction in their job and increasing withdrawal intentions. This leads to Hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 2. *When PQECR changes over time, (a) job satisfaction will change in the same direction, and (b) turnover intentions will change in the opposing direction.*

2.4 | Conceptual Model

Figure 1 presents our conceptual model.

3 | Methods

3.1 | Sample and Procedure

Our sample data of 187 participants was collected from employees based in Aotearoa New Zealand through a Qualtrics^{XM} panel (repeated at two time points, roughly 1 month apart). Panellists' information was confidential; they were paid and research shows they produce useful samples (Haar et al. 2022). At Time 1 (T1), there were 395 respondents, which reduced to 187 at Time 2 (T2), 53% attrition. All participants had received formal coaching from their supervisor in the previous 6 months. Participants were employed across 20 industries, had an average age of 44.07 years (SD = 13.03), with 65% being female, an average tenure of 6.87 years (SD = 5.66), were highly educated with 58% having a bachelor's degree or higher, and working in the

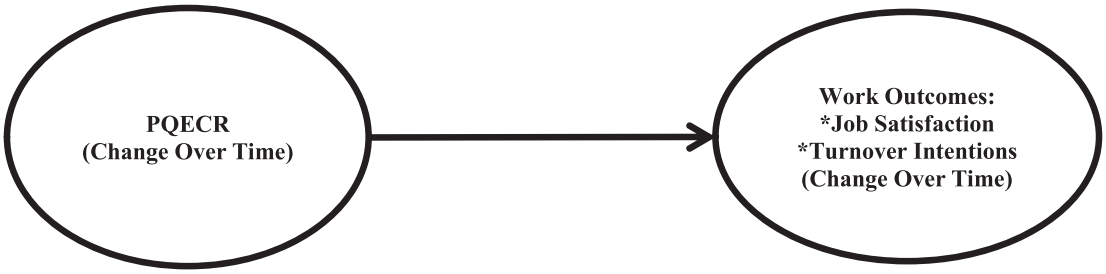

FIGURE 1 | Research model. PQECR = perceived quality of the employee coaching relationship. *Source:* Figure created by authors.

private sector (63%), public sector (29%) or not-for-profit sector (8%). An analysis of group differences confirmed that the drop-out group ($n = 208$) and the retained group ($n = 187$) were equivalent on all model variables ($p > 0.05$). The single exception was age, where the between-group mean difference was 3.82 years ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, we are assured the results were not biased due to attrition.

3.2 | Measures

All items were coded 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. We report construct reliability (CR) as an indicator of internal reliability for first-order latent variables, and omega hierarchical (ω_h) as an indicator of internal reliability for second-order latent variables (e.g., perceived quality of the employee coaching relationship [PQECR]).

PQECR was measured using 12 items from the scale developed by Gregory and Levy (2010). The PQECR construct comprises four dimensions, each containing three items. A sample item for the Genuineness of the relationship dimension is 'I believe my supervisor truly cares about me'. A sample item from the Effective communication dimension is 'My supervisor is easy to talk to'. A sample item from the Comfort with the relationship dimension is 'I am content to discuss my concerns or troubles with my supervisor'. A sample item from the Facilitating development dimension is 'My supervisor enables me to develop as an employee of our organisation' ($\omega_h(T1) = 0.95$, $\omega_h(T2) = 0.94$).

Job satisfaction was measured using three items by Judge et al. (2005) as validated by Haar et al. (2014). A sample item is 'I feel fairly satisfied with my present job' (CR(T1) = 0.85, CR(T2) = 0.89).

Turnover intentions was measured using four items from the scale developed by Kelloway et al. (1999). A sample item is 'I am planning to look for a new job' (CR(T1) = 0.94, CR(T2) = 0.95).

3.3 | Control Variables

We controlled for age, gender (male = 0, female = 1), tenure, level of education (1 = high school, 2 = technical/polytechnic, 3 = bachelor's degree, 4 = post-graduate), and hours worked per week. All controls were modelled as ordinal variables. This was based on results of meta-analyses by de Haan and Nilsson (2023) and Ng and Feldman (2008, 2009, 2010a, 2010b).

3.4 | Analytical Strategy

We analysed the data using structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM is widely used because it integrates measurement and structural models within a single framework and allows for rigorous testing of theoretically informed hypotheses (Burnette and Williams 2005). Importantly, SEM accounts for random measurement error, providing more accurate estimates of the relationships among latent constructs (Zyphur 2022). All analyses for this study were conducted using R statistical software (R Core Team 2026). We used the measureQ package (Cheung et al. 2023) to fit and evaluate the measurement model, and the lavaan package for SEM (Rosseel 2012) to conduct measurement invariance (MI) testing, estimate the structural paths, and test hypotheses.

3.5 | SEM Assumptions

SEM assumes correct model specification and an adequate sample size. Model fit indices are used to assess adequate specification, where a poor fit indicates model misspecification (Cheung et al. 2023). While there are no strict rules, a sample size of 150 or more cases has been proposed as adequate (Ployhart and Oswald 2004). The fit indices for our model were acceptable (see Section 4) and our sample exceeded 150 cases with no convergence issues.

3.6 | Common Method Bias (CMB)

Because the focal variables were measured using a self-report survey, we considered the possibility of CMB. However, some argue that method variance is often overstated (Brannick et al. 2010), and our measures are conceptually distinct, reducing the likelihood that participants relied on the same cognitive cues when responding. Additionally, the change-over-time design of our study introduced temporal separation, a recommended procedural remedy that disrupts shared response tendencies (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Consistent with Brannick et al. (2010) and Zhang et al. (2026), we compared a single-factor confirmatory factor analysis with our theorised three-factor model using the T1 measures. This procedure is analogous to the Harman's single-factor test. The single-factor model demonstrated poor fit: comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.66, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.20, standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.15, whereas the three-factor model fit the data substantially better: CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.08,

SRMR = 0.05 and the chi-square difference test was significant: $\Delta\chi^2(df) = 990.97.86$, $p < 0.01$. Combined with the aforementioned study design features, these results indicate no single factor accounted for covariance among indicator items, suggesting that CMB is unlikely to have meaningfully influenced the observed relationships.

3.7 | Measurement Invariance (MI) Procedure

To ensure that participant interpretation of our variables at T1 and T2 were equivalent, we conducted MI testing. According to Williams et al. (2009), to be confident that change-over-time represents real change (as opposed to change in participant interpretation), MI at the configural and metric levels should be achieved. This means equivalence in terms of factor structure (configural invariance) and magnitude of factor loadings (metric invariance).

Following Hammack-Brown et al. (2024) and Mowat et al. (2026), we used multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) to assess MI for our repeated measures. We first tested for configural invariance (no model constraints), then metric invariance, where we constrained factor loadings to be equal across both time points. Next, we assessed scalar invariance, where we also constrained intercepts to be equal across time points. Finally, we assessed residual invariance, where we also constrained residuals to be equal across time points. At each progressive stage, the model fit indices were assessed against the commonly accepted cut-offs: CFI ≥ 0.95, RMSEA ≤ 0.08 and the SRMR ≤ 0.10 (Williams et al. 2009).

3.8 | Hypotheses Testing Procedure

To test our hypotheses, we used change-over-time data where we regressed our variable measures at T2 on T1 (Smith and Beaton 2008) and saved the standardised residuals as an independent data set, hereafter referred to as residuals data (see Hobfoll et al. 2003). This approach is recommended by Bergh and Fairbank (2002) with the residuals data quantifying the change at T2 that was not captured at T1. Had there been no change between these time points, each residual would have equalled zero. Therefore, the presence of positive residuals was indicative of an increase over time and the presence of negative residuals indicated a decrease over time (Schaufeli et al. 2009).

4 | Results

4.1 | Measurement Model

To ensure measures at T1 and T2 had similar factor structures and acceptable fit indices, we estimated independent confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). Identical measurement models were specified for data collected at both time points. The standardised factor loadings were of similar magnitude, statistically significant and exceeded the accepted cut-off of 0.05 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Model fit indices were assessed against the commonly accepted thresholds: CFI ≥ 0.95, RMSEA ≤ 0.08 and the SRMR ≤ 0.10 (Williams et al. 2009). Fit indices at T1 were $\chi^2(df) = 373.37(225)$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.06 and SRMR = 0.04. Fit indices at T2 were $\chi^2(df) = 317.93(225)$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.04. In sum, we found the factor structure and model fit to be acceptable for data collected at both time points.

4.2 | CR

As an indicator of multi-item latent construct internal reliability, we report CR for unidimensional constructs and omega hierarchical (ω_h) for second order constructs (i.e., PQECR). At T1 and T2, the internal reliability for our latent constructs exceeded the recommended cut-off of ≥ 0.70 (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 2014), enabling us to confirm our measures to be sufficiently reliable.

4.3 | Construct Validity

To assess convergent validity, we examined the standardised factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) at T1 and T2. Ideally, standardised factor loadings are ≥ 0.70 because it means the factor explains at least 50% of the indicator's variance (Cheung et al. 2023; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Likewise, the AVE for each factor should be ≥ 0.50 because it means that at least 50% of the variance across the set of indicators can be explained by the factor to which they are loaded (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 2014). The standardised factor loadings for our model at T1 and T2 ranged from 0.74 to 0.96, and the AVE for each construct exceeded 0.50, enabling us to confirm our measures to be convergently valid.

We assessed discriminant validity following Cheung et al. (2023) by constraining our model to prohibit item cross-loading. We then applied the Fornell–Larker criterion under which discriminant validity is achieved when the AVE for each *i–j* pair of variables in a measurement model is greater than their squared correlation (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The criterion was achieved for all *i–j* pairs in our model at T1 and T2, enabling us to confirm our measures to be discriminately valid.

4.4 | MI Testing

Using MGCFA, we achieved configural, metric (weak) and scalar (strong) invariance between our measures at T1 and T2 and present the results in Table 1.

Up to and including the scalar level of invariance, the chi-squared difference test between each progressively constrained model and the one preceding it was non-significant ($p > 0.05$), and model fit indices remained stable. To be confident that the change-over-time represented real change as opposed change in participant interpretation, MI to at least the metric level is necessary (Williams et al. 2009). The results confirm we went beyond this requirement, achieving MI to the scalar level, leaving us confident in the equivalence of our measures at T1 and T2.

4.5 | Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for variable measurements at T1, T2 and the residual correlations.

For data collected at T1, T2 and the residuals data, PQECR was found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated with turnover intentions. Encouragingly, these initial results aligned with our hypothesis, were consistent across all three data sets, and were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

4.6 | Hypotheses Testing

When we regressed the T2 measures to those measured at T1, the presence of residuals not equal to zero confirmed that PQECR had fluctuated over the one-month time gap. To further assess whether the coaching relationships we measured were subject to meaningful shifts in direction over this period, we divided the residuals data into two groups. The first ($n = 82$) contained participants whose PQECR declined and the second ($n = 105$) contained participants whose PQECR improved. The mean

TABLE 1 | Tests of measurement invariance for Time 1 and Time 2.

Model	χ^2	df	*p*	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$	*p*
Configural	582.61	290	< 0.001	0.96	0.07	0.04	—	—
Metric	597.92	306	< 0.001	0.96	0.07	0.05	15.31	0.50
Scalar	605.47	318	< 0.001	0.96	0.07	0.05	7.56	0.82
Residual	645.91	337	< 0.001	0.96	0.07	0.05	40.44	< 0.01

Abbreviations: CFI = comparative fit index, df = degrees of freedom, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, SRMR = standardised root mean square residual.
Source: Authors' data.

TABLE 2 | Descriptive statistics.

Variables	*M*	SD	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Time 1 correlations ($n = 187$)										
1. Age	44.07	12.99	—							
2. Tenure	6.87	5.65	—	0.33**						
3. Level of education	2.59	1.00	—	−0.27**	−0.18*					
4. Hours per week	40.01	7.90	—	0.01	0.17	0.06				
5. PQECR	3.78	0.72	0.68	0.05	0.07	−0.01	−0.03	(0.95)[a]		
6. Job satisfaction	3.73	0.63	0.65	0.21**	0.07	−0.03	−0.11	0.41**	(0.85)	
7. Turnover intentions	2.39	1.28	0.81	−0.30**	−0.09	0.15*	0.15*	−0.47**	−0.67**	(0.94)
Time 2 correlations ($n = 187$)										
5. PQECR	3.74	0.68	0.68	—	——	—	—	(0.94)[a]		
6. Job satisfaction	3.70	0.71	0.72	—	—	—	—	0.48**	(0.89)	
7. Turnover intentions	2.41	1.23	0.84	—	—	—	—	−0.49**	−0.73**	(0.95)
Residuals data correlations ($n = 187$)										
5. PQECR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—			
6. Job Satisfaction	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.36*		
7. Turnover Intentions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	−0.29**	−0.49**	

Note: Composite reliability (CR) on diagonal in brackets.
[a]Omega hierarchical (ω_h).
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
Source: Authors' data.

between-group difference in PQECR was substantial (−0.90, $p < 0.01$) with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = -2.20$). Moreover, mean between-group differences were observed for job satisfaction (−0.34, $p < 0.01$; $d = -0.46$), and turnover intentions (0.44, $p < 0.01$; $d = -0.57$). These results support Hypothesis 1, confirming PQECR to be a dynamic construct that fluctuates over time.

To explore the relationships between PQECR and both job satisfaction and turnover intentions as they change-over-time, we fitted our conceptual model to the residuals data. Model fit indices were acceptable: $\chi^2(\text{df}) = 266.82(187)$, $p = 0.03$, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.03 and SRMR = 0.06. Figure 2 presents the unstandardised regression coefficients for the structural (path) model.

The unstandardised regression coefficients from PQECR to both job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = -0.50$, $p < 0.01$) were in the hypothesised direction and statistically significant. These results provide support for Hypothesis 2a,b and further underscore the relevance of PQECR as a temporal indicator of job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

4.7 | Control Variable Results

We included age, gender, tenure, level of education and hours worked per week (measured at T1 only) as covariates when estimating the path coefficients for our conceptual model. The unstandardised regression coefficients for tenure, level of education and hours per week were all non-significant ($p > 0.05$). However, the effect of age on both job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.02$, $p < 0.01$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = -0.01$, $p < 0.01$), and the effect of gender ($\beta = -0.32$, $p = 0.01$) on turnover intentions were statistically significant. Our results confirm that compared with younger participants, the positive relationship between PQECR and job satisfaction was slightly stronger for older participants. In terms of the negative relationship between PQECR and turnover intentions, compared with females, the effect was stronger for males, and compared with younger participants, it was slightly weaker for older participants.

5 | Discussion

5.1 | Summary of Findings

Drawing on SET, this study examined whether employees' perceptions of the quality of the coaching relationship they share with their supervisor fluctuate over time and whether such fluctuations correspond with changes in job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The findings provide clear evidence that PQECR is a dynamic relational resource rather than a static or slow moving condition. Employees' perceptions of coaching relationship quality shifted meaningfully over a 1-month period, supporting Hypothesis 1, and these shifts were strongly associated with changes in job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Increases in PQECR predicted higher job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions, whereas decreases in PQECR predicted a pattern in the opposite direction, supporting Hypothesis 2a,b, respectively.

By showing that within-person increases in PQECR correspond with within-person improvements in employee work attitudes over time, our results build on prior cross-sectional evidence that PQECR predicts job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions (Mowat et al. 2025). Moreover, they are consistent with related research that demonstrates improvements in supervisor–employee exchange relationships positively predict in-role performance, engagement and job satisfaction, and reduce turnover intentions (Ali et al. 2018; Tanskanen et al. 2019), and PSS is positively linked with meaningful work, creativity and organisational-based self-esteem (Ghafoor and Haar 2019).

Our findings align with SET, which predicts that employees reciprocate when they perceive valuable socioemotional resources are offered in goodwill (Blau 1964): When participants in our study perceived that their supervisor was increasingly supportive, authentic and invested in their development over time, they reciprocated with stronger job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Conversely, when participants perceived the relational quality declined over time, they responded with reduced job satisfaction and stronger withdrawal intentions. This pattern mirrors research showing that abusive supervision (Haar et al. 2016), supervisory neglect (Böckerman and Ilmakunnas 2009), and technology-driven detachment

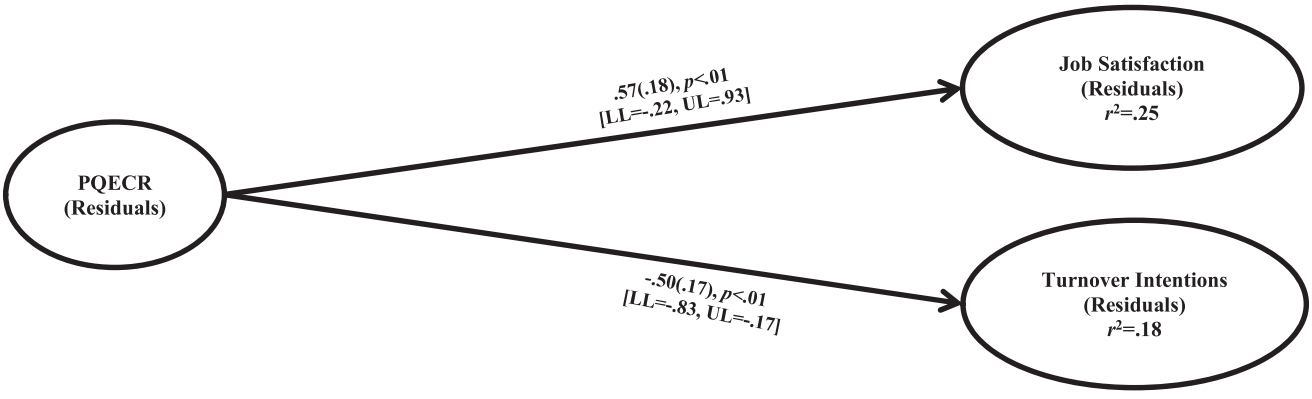

FIGURE 2 | Structural (path) model results. Unstandardised regression coefficients reported. PQECR = perceived quality of the employee coaching relationship. Figure created by authors based on the study model developed for this study.

(Wilkinson and Haar 2023) increase turnover intentions. Although we did not directly assess why PQECR fluctuated, prior work suggests that supervisors often struggle to coach their direct reports due to time pressures (Milner et al. 2023), lack of formal training (Jones et al. 2025), resistant employers (Turner and McCarthy 2015), unsupportive organisational climates (McLean et al. 2005) and balancing their managerial and coaching roles simultaneously (Koskinen and Anderson 2023). These contextual realities likely explain why we observed relational quality shift over time.

5.2 | Theoretical Implications

This study makes several theoretical contributions. First, the findings contribute to HR theory by positioning PQECR as a dynamic relational resource that HR systems must actively enable and sustain. HR theory emphasises HR's strategic role, arguing that organisational growth and competitiveness depend upon HR designing agile people management systems that align with overarching business strategy (Ananthram and Nankervis 2013; Ulrich et al. 2012). Ulrich et al. (2012) competency model frames HR as a capability builder and integrator, responsible for shaping the cultural and relational conditions through which leadership behaviours are enacted. These perspectives highlight that for HR to fulfil its strategic role, it must design and sustain people management systems capable of supporting the relational dynamics captured by PQECR because fluctuations in coaching relationship quality directly shape the employee outcomes HR seeks to influence.

Second, we extend SET by demonstrating that employees' reciprocation is shaped not only by the presence of socioemotional resources but also by their temporal trajectory. Employees appear to continuously reassess the genuineness and value of supervisory support (Spaten and Flensborg 2013), adjusting their attitudes and behaviours as relational quality evolves. This extends SET by highlighting that relational evaluation and subsequent reciprocation are ongoing and dynamic rather than static or slow moving.

Third, we advance employee coaching theory by conceptualising the supervisor–employee coaching relationship as a dynamic relational resource that may be leveraged by employees and supervisors to help employees achieve their development and performance goals. Although coaching is inherently relational (Gregory and Levy 2010), prior research has largely focused on supervisors' technical skills and behaviours (Tanskanen et al. 2019). Our findings take this a step further by demonstrating that employees update their perceptions of the coaching relationship in response to supervisory behaviours over time, suggesting that coaching effectiveness depends on regular maintenance. The temporal dimension of coaching relationship quality has not been previously established in coaching research. Therefore, our findings respond to calls for theoretical development (Echeverri 2020; Gregory and Levy 2010).

5.3 | Practical Implications

Our findings have several implications for HR practice. While supervisors are increasingly expected to coach their direct reports (Ye et al. 2016), HR professionals and senior organisational leaders play a critical role in enabling them to do so effectively. Consistent with recommendations in the coaching literature, in addition to modelling coaching behaviours at senior levels (Al Nahyan et al. 2024) and formally recognising supervisors who invest in coaching (Ribeiro et al. 2021), formal coaching skills training remains essential (McCarthy and Milner 2020) together with a supportive coaching culture (Koskinen and Anderson 2023). Because some supervisors underestimate the value of coaching or see it as a low priority (Ellinger 2013), structured HR-led training and development initiatives can help build coaching capability and reinforce its strategic importance for employee wellbeing and retention.

However, formal coaching skills training alone is insufficient. Developing and sustaining high-quality coaching relationships requires time, consistency and organisational support (Milner et al. 2023). Our findings show that employees' perceptions of the coaching relationship can shift meaningfully within short time frames, suggesting that relational quality is vulnerable to everyday pressures and competing demands. To maintain relational quality and prevent declines that may negatively affect job satisfaction and retention, organisations should prioritise regular coaching interactions, ideally monthly. While supervisors may meet with each employee for 30–60 min, coaching need not be lengthy to be effective. Even brief, focused conversations in which supervisors listen attentively to employees' concerns can communicate genuine care and support, helping sustain relational quality. HR systems can play a pivotal role in supporting this consistency. Protecting dedicated coaching time, embedding coaching expectations in work design and formally recognising supervisors who demonstrate relational leadership can motivate supervisors to coach more regularly and to a higher standard. These system-level supports help ensure that coaching is not crowded out by operational demands.

Finally, our results demonstrate that coaching relationships operate as fluid rather than fixed socioemotional job resources, and fluctuations have meaningful implications for employee wellbeing and retention. Crucially, coaching effectiveness is a product of both supervisors' technical skills and relational conditions, which HR systems can help to create and sustain. This underscores the need for HR-designed employee coaching systems that recognise relationship variation and support supervisors to maintain high-quality coaching relationships over time. By combining formal training with structured supports and relationally focused HR practices, organisations can translate their investment in employee coaching into meaningful improvements in wellbeing and talent retention.

5.4 | Limitations and Future Research

Although this study offers valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, we did not assess why PQECR fluctuated. Future research should examine the interpersonal events, contextual triggers and supervisory behaviours that drive changes in employees' perceptions of coaching relationship quality. Such work would deepen SET by clarifying how and why the perceived value of relational resources shifts over time and would help HR professionals design more targeted

interventions to support relationally effective coaching. Second, our two-wave, one-month design captured short-term relational dynamics but may not reflect micro or longer-term patterns. Future studies could employ weekly, monthly, or quarterly designs with additional waves that capture the rhythms of coaching relationships and identify when relational fluctuations are most likely to take place. This would provide HR with clearer guidance on how frequently coaching interactions should be supported to occur. Third, although participant attrition between T1 and T2 was substantial, our analysis showed no significant differences between retained and dropped participants on key variables, reducing concerns about attrition bias. Nonetheless, to support richer, multi-wave data collection, future studies may benefit from designs that minimise attrition, such as shorter survey intervals and stronger incentives to participate. Finally, although procedural and statistical checks (e.g., temporal separation, discriminate validity and the single-factor versus three-factor CFA) suggest that CMB was not a major concern, future studies could incorporate multisource data to further reduce the risk (e.g., supervisor ratings, peer reports, or organisational records). While some argue that CMB concerns may be overstated and multisource data suffers from similar method bias (Brannick et al. 2010), triangulating perspectives from multiple sources would nonetheless strengthen confidence in the relational dynamics observed and enhance the practical relevance of findings for HR system design.

5.5 | Conclusion

Employee coaching has become a globally adopted leadership practice and is increasingly positioned by organisations as a core HR strategy for developing employees (McCarthy and Milner 2020, 249). It reflects a broader shift away from command-and-control toward approaches that emphasise employee empowerment and autonomy (Pousa et al. 2018). Although the supervisor–employee coaching relationship is well-recognised as a fundamental element of the coaching process, this study provides the first change-over-time evidence that fluctuations in PQECR meaningfully predict job satisfaction and turnover intentions. By demonstrating that PQECR is not a static perception but a dynamic relational resource that can shift over periods as short as 1 month, the study extends SET to incorporate employees' continual reassessment of the genuineness of supervisory intent and the value of the socioemotional job resource being offered.

Practically, the results underscore that sustaining high-quality coaching relationships requires more than formal training. It requires time, consistency and organisational support. Regular coaching sessions, ideally monthly, appear essential for maintaining relational quality and supporting employee wellbeing and retention. For HR, this means designing coaching systems that protect time for coaching, reinforce relational leadership expectations and provide ongoing support to supervisors as they balance their operational duties with their role as coach. Future research should examine the interpersonal events and organisational conditions that cause PQECR to fluctuate, and how HR systems can be designed to sustain high-quality supervisor–employee coaching relationships long-term. Understanding these mechanisms will further strengthen HR's ability to build coaching capability and enhance employee wellbeing and retention, reinforcing HR's reputation as a valued strategic business partner.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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